

# THE Catholic Mind

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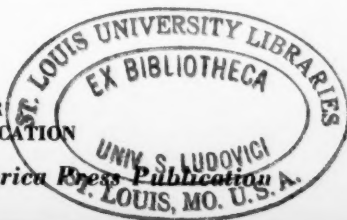
Twenty-five cents

DECEMBER, 1955

VOL. LIII, NO. III

53rd YEAR  
OF PUBLICATION

An American Press Publication





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# THE *Catholic Mind*

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VOL. LIII

DECEMBER, 1955

NO. 1116

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## Message to Our Readers

FOR THIRTEEN YEARS this monthly journal has been thoughtfully guided and scrupulously edited by the hand of a single executive editor, Father Benjamin L. Masse, S.J. It would be difficult to say how much the *Catholic Mind* and America Press owe Father Masse. With quiet diligence and unflinching interest he has labored all these years to make the *Catholic Mind* one of the outstanding sources of Catholic documentation in the United States. Under his executive editorship, its circulation has more than doubled.

With the close of this 53rd volume, Father Masse hands over his stewardship to another member of the *America* editorial staff, Father Vincent S. Kearney, S.J. The new executive editor's interests, which match his world-ranging travels, embrace the religious and social concerns of the whole globe. It will not be an easy task to replace Father Masse, but the new editor brings great competence and a large background of experience to his new work. Our readers will welcome the new editor and wish him well. But they will also want to add their word of esteem and appreciation to Father Masse for his long years of labor for the *Catholic Mind*.

Father Masse, as vice-president of the America Press, will now be able to give even more time to the many phases of our expanding work of publication as well as to his duties as a veteran associate editor of the *National Catholic Weekly Review*, *America*. For all his patient and selfless work, which included the publication in 1952 of *The Catholic Mind Through Fifty Years* (America Press, \$5), our thanks!

A word of thanks, too, is due to all *Catholic Mind* readers. Their interest and support continue to make this monthly magazine a con-

stantly more important forum for the discussion of Catholic principles and their application to every phase of human life. I wish you all a cordial and grateful blessing at this holy Christmas season. And may the joys and graces of Christmas remain with you through all the months of the New Year.

Thurston N. Davis, S.J.  
EDITOR



### *Our Place in the Lay Apostolate*

We are realizing that as we advance, grow and develop as agriculturists, industrialists, professional men, politicians and administrators, and acquire all the necessary knowledge, skills and techniques, so also we must achieve a corresponding intellectual and spiritual formation and growth as adult Catholics.

We are members of a body, Christ's Mystical Body. Each part of a body is intended to reach its full development. Each one of us has his role and his individual function to fulfill for the good of the whole. Each contribution is unique because each person is unique. No one else can do in our place exactly what we have to do—it is *my* action which is required of *me*.

This fact is a source of joy and sound pride because it can give to each one's life something incomparable. Each one has his own vocation as a member of the Mystical Body, and the essential duty, therefore, of discovering the place God wishes for him. . . .

Probably the surest way for people living in the world to discover their vocation is to engage in an approved form of lay apostolic activity. It will mean joining an organization or group acting under the authority of the hierarchy, for there can be no apostolate independent of the Church.—*Basil Clancy* in *HIBERNIA*, September, 1955.



# The Mystery of Christmas

SISTER TERESIA BENEDICTA A CRUCE<sup>1</sup>

Reprinted from THE TABLET\*

EACH one of us has experienced the happiness of fulfillment when Advent, that time of longing, is followed by the bells of Christmas eve and the renewal upon our decorated and illuminated altars of the miracle of the Incarnation. But as yet heaven and earth are still divided. The Star of Bethlehem is a star in darkest night, now as in the past. On the second day of Christmas the Church already discards her white and festive garments and puts on the red dress of martyrdom, and on the fourth day the purple of sorrow: St. Stephen, the First Martyr, and the Holy Innocents, they too are among the attendants of the Child in the Crib. What has become of the jubilation of the heavenly hosts, and where now is peace on earth? Peace on

earth to men of good-will. Not all, however, are of good-will.

Darkness covered the earth, and He came as light into darkness, but the darkness comprehended Him not. He brought light and peace to those who took Him in: peace with the Father in Heaven, peace with those who are also children of light and of the Father in Heaven, and the deep inner peace of the heart; but He did not bring peace with the children of darkness.

That is the first and weighty truth which the poetic magic surrounding the Child in the Crib ought not to disguise. The Mystery of the Incarnation and the Mystery of Iniquity are close to one another. The night of sin is even more black and awful when contrasted with the light from Heaven. The Child in the Crib

<sup>1</sup> Sister Teresa Benedicta a Cruce, whose Christmas Meditation we print in translation, was better known under her name in the world as Dr. Edith Stein. A Jewess by birth, she was received into the Church in 1922 and took the name of Teresa at her baptism because the works of this saint had given the first impulse to her conversion. The second came from her teacher, Professor Husserl, at Freiburg University, whose assistant she became. She was a scholar in her own right, and became well-known as the German translator of St. Thomas' *Quaestiones de Veritate*, and Newman's early letters and diaries. She also wrote on the education of women.

stretches out His little hands and His smile already appears to convey what the man said later: "Follow me." And as St. John followed, without asking "Where" or "Why," so St. Stephen followed to fight the powers of darkness and unbelief, and he is joined at the Crib by the innocent children, the faithful shepherds and the humble Kings. Confronting them all is the night of the hardness and blindness of hearts: the Pharisees who know all about the time and place when the world's Saviour shall be born, but who do not derive from it the call to Bethlehem; King Herod, who wants to kill the Lord of Life. The Child in the Crib divides all. He who is not for Him is against Him. And we, too, must choose between light and darkness.

#### CHILDREN OF GOD

God became Man so that men can become children of God. He came into the world in order to be a mystical body with us. He is the head, we are the members. When we place our hands in the hands of the divine Child, when we accept His call "Follow me," then the way is free for us to share in His divine life. That is the beginning. This is not yet the vision of God in His glory; it is still the darkness of faith, but it is no longer of this world, but a passage into the Kingdom of God. When the blessed

Virgin spoke her "*Fiat*," the Kingdom of God on earth had its beginning, and she was its first servant. And all who acknowledged the Child in word and deed, before and after His birth—St. Joseph, St. Elizabeth with her child, and all who stood at the Crib—all entered this Kingdom of God.

It was quite different from what had been expected according to the psalms and prophets. The Romans remained masters of the country, the high priests and Pharisees continued to lay their yoke upon the people. But those who followed Christ carried His kingdom invisibly within themselves. Their earthly burdens were not taken away from them; indeed, others were added; but each had within himself a power that eased the burdens and made mild the yoke. So it is still today. The divine life kindled in souls is the light that penetrates the darkness, the miracle of the Holy Night. He who carries it within himself knows what it means; for others it is an incomprehensible stammer.

But if to be one with God is the first thing, a second thing follows from it. If Christ is the Head and we are members of the Mystical Body, then we men are one in God. That is why the love of man is the measure of our love of God. But this love differs from the natural love of men, which seeks to possess the beloved wholly for itself. The

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others are "strangers" whom we would keep from us. The Christian, however, knows no "strange men." He is his "neighbor" who is before him and who needs him most, regardless of the bonds of blood and race, whether or not we "like him" or think him worthy of our help.

### LOVE OF CHRIST

The love of Christ knows no boundaries. It is infinite, it is not put off by ugliness or filth. He came for the sake of sinners, not for the sake of the just. And when the love of Christ lives within us, we do as He did and go after the lost sheep. For the love of Christ, unlike the love of men, desires to win men for God and not for their own sakes. For when we have saved a man in God, we are one with him in God, while our desire to possess, sooner or later, will lead to loss.

There is, however, a third sign of our being children of God. The first was to be one with God, the second to be one in God, the third is: "If any one love me, he will keep my word" (St. John 14, 23). To be a child of God is to do His will, not our own will; to place all cares and hopes in God's hands, and not to worry about ourselves and our future. On that depends the liberty and joy of being a child of God. How few, even of the devout and those always ready for heroic sacrifices, have this liberty and joy!

They always go about as if depressed by the heavy burden of their worries and duties. They all know the parable of the birds under heaven and the lilies of the fields, but when they meet someone who is poor and lives in insecurity, and yet goes about unconcerned about his future, they shake their heads as over an extraordinary happening.

Of course, we must not expect that God will provide at all times for our income and the sort of life which we think desirable. Only when there is a readiness to accept anything and everything from the Father's hand, trust in God can be unshakable. For He alone knows what is good for us.

"Thy will be done" becomes, therefore, the standard of the Christian's life, his only care; all others God has taken upon Himself. But this one remains as long as we live. It is, as it were, that we have been given no final assurance to remain upon the paths of God. Just as the first men, being children of God, by their own choice removed themselves from God, so each one of us permanently lives on the razor's edge, between nothing and the fullness of divine life. This is an objective fact, but sooner or later we shall also come to experience it subjectively. In the early days of our spiritual life, when we have just begun to put ourselves in God's hands, we feel His guidance firmly, and are clear about

what we ought or ought not to do. But it is not always so. To be a Christian is to live the whole life of Christ, to go also the way of the Cross, to Gethsemane and Golgotha. And all suffering coming from without is as nothing compared with the dark night of the soul, when the divine light no longer shines and the voice of God no longer speaks. God is there, but He is hidden and silent. And this is part of the divine mystery.

### THE DIVINE WILL

But God has become Man to save us, to bind us to Himself and to one another, to make our will conform to His own. He knows our nature and has given us everything that we need to arrive at our goal. It is not enough to kneel at the crib and to be captured by the magic of the Holy Night once a year if we want to bring the divine life into our entire human life. We need the constant communion with Him, to listen and follow the words He has spoken which have been handed down to us. Above all we must pray as Christ Himself has taught us. "Ask and you shall receive," that is the certain promise of being heard. And he who daily and from his heart says "Lord, Thy will be done," may have confidence that even though he no longer may have any subjective certainty, yet he cannot fail to attain the divine will.

Moreover, Christ has not left us as orphans. He has sent His spirit to teach us all Truth; He has founded His Church guided by His Spirit, and in her He has appointed His Vicars through whose mouths His Spirit speaks to us in human language. In her the faithful have become a community, one living for the other. Thus we are not alone, and where confidence in our own insight and even our own prayers fails us, the power of obedience and of the prayers of others may help.

At the stable of Bethlehem the Word has become Flesh, but this is true also in another form: "He who eats my Flesh and drinks my Blood will have life everlasting." The divine Saviour has helped our humanity. Just as our body needs its daily bread, divine life, too, demands continual nourishment. "I am the living bread which came down from Heaven." (St. John vi. 51.) To make this bread our daily bread is to experience every day the mystery of Christmas, of the Incarnation of the Word. It is the way to preserve the oneness with God and to grow daily deeper into the Mystical Body of Christ.

The Mysteries of Christianity are an indivisible whole. To see one is to be led to all the others. The road from Bethlehem inevitably leads to Golgotha, from the Crib to the Cross. When the Blessed Virgin carried her child to the Temple, it

was foretold her that a sword shall pierce her soul, that this child shall be a sign of contradiction. It is the annunciation of suffering, the war between light and darkness foreshadowed already by the Crib.



### **U. S. Church Statistics**

According to the *Yearbook of American Churches*, the Catholic Church in the United States is almost twice as large as the biggest Protestant denomination. At the end of 1954, there were 32,403,332 American Catholics. The Baptists, divided among 26 groups, counted 18,448,621. The Methodists came third, with 11,688,002 members split among 21 bodies. The Lutherans had 6,818,383 members. Taken together, the Protestants numbered 57,124,142.

It is somewhat surprising to learn that church membership as a percentage of population has almost quadrupled during the past century. Apparently, only 16 per cent of the American people were Church members in 1850. Today 60.3 per cent are members. Catholics are 20 per cent of the population, Protestants 35.3 per cent.—*Adapted from a press release of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., Sept. 6, 1955.*



### **"I Was in Prison . . ."**

Many of our advocates of social justice are mute on the topic of justice for released men and women. Blanket rules are made by civil-service boards ruling out these poor disfranchised individuals. The man with the record is lost. The Federal Government, the State, the City, the County tell him not to apply. That old question, "Were you ever convicted of a crime," is on all the applications for civil-service positions. Industry for the most part is just as bad, and even the labor unions have their rules banning the man who failed.

This is no plea to the emotions. We are not being sentimental or maudlin. Justice demands that we give men a chance. It is the teaching of Jesus Christ Himself.—*Ralph Gallagher, S.J., in VOICE OF ST. JUDE, June, 1955.*

## Via Bethlehem

HELEN C. CALIFANO

*Reprinted from THE MAGNIFICAT\**

**M**ILLIONS of people will travel the road to Bethlehem this year, and, despite the physical limitations of the ancient town, all will find lodgings there. Some will get there early and leave late; the overwhelming majority of the pilgrims, however, will arrive at their destination the night before Christmas and will remain for a limited period. A few will make the trip by airplane, boat, train, or automobile; the rest will travel by way of the spirit according to directions received from the heart.

It is an interesting fact that every one of this vast army will reach Bethlehem by a different road—depending on his age, his acquaintance with sorrow, his wisdom, his need—and not everyone who makes the journey will be glad, particularly those who make it alone. For some it will be the first such pilgrimage, for others it will be the last. All who journey will do so of their own free will, without constraint, consciousness of a sense of great privilege.

As all the roads of the ancient

world led to Rome, so all the roads of Christendom lead at Christmastide to Bethlehem of Judea. Many of these are narrow, indirect paths from places of work and responsibility to the manger where lies a Babe; and the people who use them will do so because they have heard tidings of exceeding great joy. Like shepherds who watched their flocks by night and made their way across starlit fields to see that which had come to pass, so countless hearts will leave the everyday world of care when they hear the angel voices sing across the sky. They will leave the stalls in the market place, the whirring looms and the artist's stool; they will forsake the busy street, the threshing floor and the ocean's restless waters; they will abandon the problems that vex, the lingering sadness, the impulse to despair, to follow in haste and in joy the winding footpath of the wondering shepherds. Everyone at some time or other in his life travels to Bethlehem for this reason alone.

Another road will be the quiet

\* 131 Laurel St., Manchester, N. H., December, 1954

one first traversed by Joseph and Mary as humbly they walked the way God had shown them. For Joseph there was no turning away from a life shadowed by solemn prophecy; for Mary there was her utter surrender: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word." Thus side by side and with their Lord they entered the little town of Bethlehem.

Even so will great numbers of the faithful go there this blessed season. Wearing yokes that are not of their own making, distressed by yearnings to which they do not yield, seeking ever to know and to do God's holy will, they travel in loving obedience to the place of their soul's desire. They are the good men of earth who, without show or wish for acclaim, wipe away the tears of those who sorrow; they are those who, bowing to Divine command, battle daily with evil and woe. Their course, lacking fanfare, causes no stir save in the halls of Heaven.

#### FOLLOWING A STAR

A shining highway is the road that follows a Star. Here the travelers know a special radiance, for each of them is led by the cherished memory of some moment or of some person that was to him a Star in the East. For one it is a mother's face; for another the life of a holy priest; for still another the comfort of a friendship proved and assured.

Those who travel this road know the unshakable power of revelation. While others may doubt, and question, and wonder what it is they seek and whither it is they go, these suffer no misgivings. Like the Wise Men of old they know only that they have seen a Star and that they must go where it leads them. The Magi carried gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, and they moved in the glitter and the dazzle of kings. So walk the wise of all time and of all climes who follow the Star with the same steadfast devotion.

Among the travelers, no matter on which road they journey—most men of spiritual maturity are familiar with them all—there is a sense of deep fellowship. For this trip, at least, social barriers have been removed, intellectual differences minimized, and the barbs with which humans hurt one another hidden from sight. The prince walks with his page and the seer with the court's jester. Like men everywhere who seek a common objective, they feel the bond of their mutual hope. The only dissimilarity lies in the intensity of this experience, for it can be said of them that of all men and women held together by a dream they know best the ties of kinship. Aware that they are a great family born of the same Father, they regard one another as brothers. More than that, they know that those not found on the

Bethlehem road are their brothers, too.

It may be noted that the throngs moving along the roads to Bethlehem are somewhat different from the average mass movements of human beings, because so many children line the ranks. For a journey fraught with such confounding philosophical implications, it is amazing to find childhood so significantly represented. Every mile of the way is joyous with their laughter and every pause made gay with their sweet delight. With disarming simplicity they accept the fact of the Saviour's birth, with breathless dispatch they believe. They who are so briefly removed from infancy's wonder know the manger's glory as if in remembrance. For those who have crossed childhood's borders into realms closer to the setting sun, it is requisite that they *become* as little children if they would travel the old, old road.

A characteristic of these Christmas pilgrims is their extraordinary capacity for remembering similar journeys they have made. It matters little whether it is a Christmas slightly removed or a Christmas half a century away, it is remembered in all its wealth of precious detail. A strain of music heard on a long-ago Christmas night is recalled as if sounded but yesterday; the fragrance of a special tree in a special place drifts unchanged across the

years. The smile on a face once loved, the sounds of laughter below stairs, the Christmas lights upon the snow are all remembered seemingly forever. While each Christmas in turn is relived at will, those of childhood are remembered best and the happy ones most frequently. The journeys which include a dark Gethsemane are also remembered, yet almost invariably rejected. Perhaps the mind cannot bear that the heart reaching for Bethlehem be heavy or sad.

#### HIGHWAYS OF PEACE

The roads to Bethlehem are not always seen, and yet they are the most important highways in the world. Whereas the world itself is shadowed by tensions and stained with the blood of endless wars, the Christmas roads are filled with peace. In the world man is, in the main, acquisitive either for himself or for those he loves. On the road to Bethlehem, however, he thinks of the poor and the needy; he replaces his charts and blueprints of personal and national conquest with dreams of world unity and hopes for better understanding.

Here he realizes better than anywhere else that righteousness matters and that his life's pilgrimage, like this blessed journey, must travel the way of love and peace. It does not always follow that the promises man makes to God at this time hold



against the hard realities and the buffetings of modern living, but it is important to the happiness of the world that they are made at all.

Most of the pilgrims have made the journey year after year without fail. There are those, however, who for a period were remiss. They did not travel the road because, for some reason or other, they could not find it. Something stood between them and the Bethlehem highway which made it impossible for them to reach it. Sometimes the barrier was greed for power and earthly riches; sometimes, pride or impurity; sometimes, deliberate transgression of God's law. In any case, for a part of their lives they had lost the course. Perhaps of all the travelers to Bethlehem these are the most grateful, for only those who have fallen from grace can know the special gladness of reinstatement and only those who have been away can know the peace and joy of returning.

While journey's end usually finds worldly travelers very weary and worn, this is not true of the pilgrims at the end of the Bethlehem road. Here fatigue diminishes with every mile gained, and as the humble little town, with its narrow streets and modest white spires, comes into view, everyone feels renewed vigor and inner refreshment. It is the miracle of this journey that the old and the young alike experience this stimulation. It is a truth to which

millions can testify that whereas they started the journey fretfully, tired in body and in spirit, when they found themselves in the dim stable and heard the lowing of the cattle, when they saw the Babe cradled in the fragrant hay, when they smiled into the eyes of Mary, His mother, and heard the flutter of angel wings, they were fresh again as on the day they first believed.

### A TIME OF GRACE

Every experience, no matter how slight or seemingly casual, leaves its indelible mark; an experience of the infinite dimensions of a trip to Bethlehem completely changes personality. The multitudes on the roads to Bethlehem are aware that this is so, especially those who have journeyed many times before. They know that once they have reached their destination they will never be the same again. Journeying under the stars of the Christmastide, they turn their eyes to the heavens and catch glimpses of glory nowhere else revealed and which will light their days until time is no more. Dreaming under Judean skies, they see the world and its problems in proper perspective and in that light of hope which makes all things possible.

All who go to Bethlehem are better for having done so. Many are healed of wounds and given the grace to bear their crosses. Some even enter the Communion of Saints.

For many of the human race life is an endless search for the new and the novel. Experiences are tasted like so many cups of wine, even the best of which are set aside for something with a richer glow, sweeter fragrance and flavor. The show-places of the world are visited once, twice, maybe thrice, but eventually the unknown calls and we move on.

The journey to Bethlehem is different from all other human experience because it is perennially fresh. Those who have known the joys of one such pilgrimage yearn to make it again and again. Count-

less of the millions who visit Bethlehem on Christmas Eve return a number of times during the succeeding year. These additional journeys are made at any time of the day or night, at any season, and from the most unlikely starting points. Sometimes one goes to Bethlehem while strolling through a sun-drenched field in August or when sitting by a moon-streaked sea. It is good for man that he seeks this place so often and that he finds it so dear. The roads to Bethlehem, in a way, are not roads at all but the heart's ceaseless turnings towards the radiant face of God.



### *Freedom of the Cell*

The individual who has only the physical liberty which men enjoy under representative government knows freedom merely in its most elemental form. Though he be a king in power and a Croesus in wealth, unless he is living in accordance with the spiritual laws of his nature, as revealed to him by God, he is the slave of a slave, for Satan is his master.

Far freer than he are the countless men and women languishing in Communist prisons all over the world for the "crime" of having refused to surrender their spiritual independence for a scrap of physical freedom. We may pray for, but never pity, them, for the souls of these men and women are their own, as the materialist's can never be, and the darkness of their cells is illuminated by that Truth which makes men free.—*Janice Hall Quilligan in the CANADIAN MESSENGER OF THE SACRED HEART, October, 1955.*

# My Six Years in Red China

MOST REV. F. A. DONAGHY, M.M.

*Bishop of Wuchow*

*Reprinted with permission of International News Service.*

**W**UCHOW is an old Chinese city of close to a quarter of a million people, located at the confluence of the Fu and West Rivers in South China. It is the headquarters for the Maryknoll Wuchow mission, embracing a large area of Kwangsi Province.

The year 1949 we lived under the threat of Communist invasion. There was only a token defense of the south when the "Liberation Army" arrived in Wuchow late that year.

The political arm of the new government went into power as soon as the armies had passed through the city. At first they were benign. They made big promises. They told the people that they had been given their freedom. There were to be no restrictions on the foreigners or on the Church.

Actually, the Reds were following a blueprint. They had benefited by the experience of Russia, and by the mistakes they had made in North China. The blueprint called for complete entrenchment of the government before harsher measures

yoked the people to Communist slavery.

Indoctrination in the new theories began within a few weeks. It was obligatory on everyone. Groups were brought to Wuchow for instruction from outlying villages. They were then sent home to act as instructors, and other groups were brought in. Communists from the north guided the courses of instruction and indoctrination.

Gradually the power of Communism began to be felt. The once carefree Chinese were not free to come and go as they wished. Like creeping paralysis, the new thinking made over the lives of the Chinese. The change was as slow as it was deliberate.

The teachers, for example, were won over by being promised twice as much pay. Actually, when control was secured, the teachers found their salary was reduced by two-thirds. Disillusionment set in, but it was too late.

If the Nationalists returned to China today, they would find whole-

hearted cooperation from the teaching group and many other classes. Government workers are particularly disillusioned in the matter of salary. Besides they are fed up with constant indoctrination.

The soldiers, however, seem well fed, well clothed and well taken care of. They strut around with new power. Even here, though, I am not sure if some disillusionment may not have set in.

After five years of Communism, the people have no illusions left. There is a certain amount of despair now, and they hope for another liberating army to come to save them. This hope is very strong. They realize they are prisoners.

Within a year, the Communists had built up their strength and gained complete control. A second military campaign was necessary to wipe out dissidents who had taken to the hill country. It was thorough and brutal. At the same time, the Communists systematically registered every individual and family—a momentous task. The Reds likewise proscribed by law the possession of any type of weapon by the people. Imprisonment and even death were the punishment.

### LAND REFORM

The land reform was initiated in South China about a year after the indoctrination was put into effect. More than any other program, the

redistribution of fields put the country under the yoke of Communism.

To win the sympathies of the poorer people, the Reds first called for a drastic rent reduction. If this didn't induce the people to attend the nightly indoctrination courses, threats did.

The Communists called it "a preparatory stage of the land reform." Whipping the people to a fanatical and blind hatred of the "landlord" was termed "the political enlightenment of the peasant."

It became clear that the aim of this grandiose scheme was not to help the people, but to accustom the Chinese to a black, implacable hatred of any "enemy" who was so named by the state.

Class hatred was stirred up in groups where no one was actually "wealthy." Only after it was whipped to a fever pitch did a trial distribution of land begin. Often, Chinese wanted to reapportion the fields without the violence and bloodshed. The landed gentry were not universally hard on their tenants, and were not uniformly hated.

The Reds, however, prohibited the "land reform" without the blood-bath preliminary. The poor, duped peasants were guided on to be the executioners of their own neighbors. The landholder was taken into custody and long lists of charges preferred against him. All of his possessions were distributed to the poor.

Then the landholders were subjected to public trials. They were obliged to kneel on broken glass and stones, and the people were urged to beat them. Many died.

What benefits the land reform might have given to the poor were wiped out by the Communist system of taxation.

People who owned nothing were given two or three acres to cultivate. For them it was a dream fulfilled. But when their first crop was cut, the snake in the rice field became evident. Taxation was much higher than it had ever been. It has been getting progressively worse.

About a year ago, the farmers were urged to sell their surplus rice to the Government. The Government soon set up quotas, and the farmers were forced to sell even their food rice. Then, when they asked for help, the Government refused to sell them rice.

A man-made famine resulted. In the last six months, conditions in South China have become really critical.

After almost six years of this kind of life, it is no wonder that the people have become disillusioned. There is no more land to work, because there are no more landlords. Each farmer has his own two or three acres, from which he can produce just about enough to live. Moreover, he must pay upwards of 30 per cent in taxes.

All over China the farmers are disillusioned. They were duped and they know it.

### RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

In November, 1950, I felt that the time of pressure upon the Church was fast approaching.

By now the Reds had torn down the placards proclaiming religious freedom and protection for the foreigner. One of our priests had already been arrested. They claimed he was a spy who had been parachuted into the country by the Americans.

Some of the churches were guarded by soldiers to bar the entry of Catholics. Christianity was a frequent subject of the indoctrination classes. It was denounced as an arm of foreign invasion, and the missionaries were assailed as espionage agents of China's capitalistic enemies.

In December, I began noticing people about the church property who didn't belong there.

On December 18, I received a telegram announcing that Father George Gilligan, of Brooklyn, had been arrested. Two members of the security police came to the house the next day, while I was in church. They sent for me. They said they had come to search the house, and led me straight to the bedroom, where they had already been.

I went to a wardrobe to open it,

suspecting there would be something inside it that I had never put there. The policeman pushed me aside, opened it and gasped in indignation. There he had found a .45 revolver. He shouted and yelled and tried to make me admit ownership.

Meanwhile, the other policeman had opened a small drawer. He feigned great surprise at finding a package of raw opium—the first raw opium I had seen in all my years in China.

#### PLACED UNDER ARREST

They arrested me and bound my arms. Then they arrested Father Justin Kennedy, of West Shokan, N. Y., who was in Wuchow to buy books for his Maryknoll School. In order to make the arrest official, they dropped some bullets in his luggage. He spent the same time in jail as I did.

We were taken to a house of detention. Throughout the day, others were brought in—among them Dr. William Wallace, an old friend from the Southern Baptist Hospital, and Sister Rosalia, one of the Maryknoll sisters.

We were moved across the Fu River to the Kwangsi jail. It had been built to hold 1,000 prisoners but the Communists crowded in a great many more than that.

The normal cell holds 16 prisoners, and has two-decker wooden beds. Each prisoner had enough

room to stretch out but little more. Only one prisoner could walk up and down at a time.

The prison is surrounded by a high wall topped by barbed wire, which was said to be electrified. There were hundreds of soldiers there and it was absolutely impossible to escape.

The food in the prison was very meager—12 ounces of rice and one vegetable. We were given a small cup of water in the morning and another in the afternoon. This had to serve for drinking and washing. During my five months in jail I was allowed to go in the yard and take two baths in a small wooden basin. The second time I went out I became dizzy from the fresh air.

It was a distinct shock to the Chinese when the beloved Dr. William Wallace, probably the most outstanding citizen in Wuchow, was arrested. He was admired by everyone. He had a wonderful reputation for his fine surgical and medical work, but he was loved for his kindness and devotion to the sick and the poor.

But the Government declared him to be an outstanding spy. Teachers were instructed to tell how he deceived the people.

It was obvious that his arrest on planted evidence was a severe shock to him. He loved the Chinese people so much that he could not imagine this treatment in return. I

tried to talk to him but he seemed to have no interest in what I said. He appeared dazed.

Then one morning (February 10) as the boy was dispensing water, he looked in Dr. Wallace's cell. He came running back shouting that the doctor was hanging in his cell. The guards hurried up, looked in and then opened our cell. They insisted that Father Kennedy and I cut him down. Artificial respiration attempts were hopeless.

In the house of detention, the Reds had installed a loud-speaker system. This was turned on and a tremendous tirade was delivered to stir up the people against Americans. Other loud-speakers throughout the city carried the same harangue.

I soon concluded that—as far as the adults were concerned—the effects of Communism were rather superficial. In the schools the propaganda was more effective. There everything is interpreted on a patriotic basis. Love of country and love of Mao Tse-tung have an appeal to the youngsters. But those over 25 years of age seem reluctant to accept propaganda.

After five months in prison, I was suddenly released and allowed to return to my house.

During the past three years I lived alone with a Chinese priest. One by one, the Maryknoll missionaries were arrested or put under detention. House arrest was often more

wearing on them than being carted off to prison. Imprisonment ended the long uncertainty of what was going to happen.

#### EXPULSION OF PRIESTS AND SISTERS

The expulsion of priests and sisters from China got under way in January, 1951. As the months passed, the stream of missionaries escorted to the Chinese Hong Kong border swelled.

On the eve of the Communist invasion of South China there were 5,380 foreign priests, brothers and sisters working on the mainland. By the end of 1951, only 3,450 remained. During the next 12-month period, an additional 1,612 were forced to leave. At the end of 1953, a mere 323 were still in the country. Many of these were in jails.

One by one, the churches were turned into granaries, schools and public offices.

The Reds allowed me to live in my own house under a sort of semi-official arrest. I was questioned several times about my daily walk to town, but it was never forbidden. A member of the secret police followed me, so I had to be very circumspect.

The sisters were not allowed to teach religion, had to dress in Chinese clothes and were restricted to the city. They did wear, however, little medals on their jackets, so

everyone in town knew who they were.

Our large Sacred Heart School in Wuchow, along with other schools, was taken over by the Government. The Sacred Heart School is now known as Wuchow School No. 3.

The prime purpose of the school in China today is to indoctrinate the young in Communism. I recall one day looking into a classroom. The woman teacher of the third grade was instructing the children to report to school authorities anything said at home by parents or relatives that was against the Government or the Communist Party.

By reporting such talk they would prove their love of their country. Also, the teachers ridiculed the Christian students because of their belief in God.

The Catholic people stood very firm in the face of Communist threats. When the Reds tried to force them to join an independent Catholic Church, they gave no response.

All in all, I doubt if the Reds will have any success in eradicating the faith of the people who already have it. The Chinese Christians, of course, will suffer much for their beliefs. Many Christians are in forced-labor camps because they would not compromise.

The Church has won great "face" in China. It is respected by the peo-

ple as never before. This is because it has stood stanch and firm in the face of Communist attack.

After the Geneva Conference in 1954, a number of American priests were expelled from China; then for months the Communists seemed to forget the foreigners.

When suddenly I was summoned in June to the Security Police Bureau, I had no idea of expulsion. I thought I was going back to jail.

For three days I had to report to the Security Police Bureau, appearing before a panel of officials. The judge told me that they had four main accusations against me:

1. After the liberation, I had refused to allow a young Catholic to serve on a Government committee to represent the Catholic Church. Therefore, I used my power against the people.

2. I had forbidden a young man to join a Communist youth organization. I was therefore reactionary.

3. I had threatened with excommunication anyone who signed a petition condemning Archbishop Riberi, the Holy Father's personal representative to China. I was a tool of foreign imperialism.

4. I had established the Legion of Mary throughout the diocese, and this was a reactionary organization.

There was no mention of the charges that had earlier put me in jail—the planted revolver and the raw opium.



I admitted the charges, saying that I had acted within my rights and that I did what was my duty. I denied that the Legion of Mary was reactionary.

I was a little angry at the injustice of the whole thing. A frameup was being staged to get rid of me. On the third day, the head judge read the sentence that I was to be banned forever from China. "This is to be put in effect immediately," he added.

One cannot shake off his thoughts of China merely by coming into the free territory of Hong Kong. All of us in the free world must be alerted to Communism, recognizing it for what it is.

It is evil.

The Communist's hatred of religion should make us reexamine the part religion plays in our own lives. It should make this treasure more precious to us. It is the lack of religious conviction in the lives of free men that gives Communism power. Without this conviction, the siren song of Communist propaganda can easily deceive us.

Since my return to the free world, I have often been asked whether or not we can have peaceful coexistence with the Communist nations.

In my opinion, our objectives are so diametrically opposed that I can see no hope of attaining peaceful coexistence. In fact, I do not think that there will even be a long coexistence between Russia and China.

I know that adult Chinese are not keen to look upon the Russian people as their great Russian brothers. The Chinese people as a whole have an ingrained xenophobia. They do not want to be under a foreign power even in a secondary position.

It is wrong to say that the Chinese people have accepted Communism. There are two strengths in China today. The strength of the bully, which is Communism exercising control through the army; and the strength and unity of suffering, which is the vast mass of people.

The Communists know they do not have the people behind them. Given the opportunity, the people would rise against them, and the Reds know it. When I left China, people were openly talking about rebellion. The Chinese no longer believe Communist propaganda. The high standard of living of the Russians, the production which exceeds the production of all other nations, is played up in the press. But the people in Wuchow know that there is not one single Russian item in any store for sale. There is still American merchandise, and the people are anxious to buy that.

The Chinese are of a religious nature. Now religion is derided and limited. One cannot take away fundamental liberties and not expect a tremendous reaction. This is as true for the Chinese people as it is for Americans.

# Equality in a Democracy

MOST REV. JOHN J. WRIGHT  
*Bishop of Worcester*

*Excerpt from a sermon at the University of Notre Dame, June 5, 1955*

**I**T IS almost political heresy to talk now-a-days about the providential character of privileges and the real inequalities among men. The understandable attempts to defend and develop democracy, the need to inspire the American people with a determination to preserve their democracy and the various measures taken to implement that determination have all had one potentially unfortunate effect. Let no one misunderstand what we are about to say. No group is more devoted to democracy and all that it means, none is more indebted to American democracy than the Catholic people. Conversely, no people have more ardently espoused its cause or contributed to its development than the Catholic people.

But nevertheless a very real danger lurks in the loose talk and loose thinking of the moment about the equality that is supposed to be characteristic of democracy and of democratic institutions. In emphasizing civil equality, legal equality and the fact that all men are equally the creatures of God and entitled to equal justice under the Law, we stand in danger of forgetting the many and important ways in which people are not equal, in which they need not be equal and in which they never will be equal.

Genuine democracy, in any valid Christian sense or truly American tradition, does not cultivate the pretense that all men are equal in every respect. Democracy calls upon us to promote equal opportunity, equal justice and a recognition of those essential equalities which flow from essential human personality. But far from being bad democracy, it is a very real service to democracy to resist the mediocrity and degeneration of values which flow from the mistaken notion that all men are equal in every respect, that no persons are better than others. The fact is that some persons are very much better than others; the further fact, sometimes most important to remember, is that some people are very much worse than others. Democracy is well served when these facts

are scrupulously pointed out and the reasons are honestly stated why some men are better and what makes others worse.

It is a false democracy, it is an evil spirit hostile to democracy, which seeks to level all persons and reduce to least common denominators all beliefs, all differences and all values. This spurious spirit of democracy, this counterfeit democracy pretends that all privilege is unfounded and all inequality is unfortunate. It promotes the insincere pretense that all religions are equally of divine right and that all shades of human thinking are equally accurate; it is even argued that those who refuse to discredit legitimate privilege or to abdicate divine prerogatives offend the principles of democracy.

#### UNPOPULAR BUT TRUE

This sort of talk, so common in our day, is simply nonsense. Not all medical techniques are equally effective. Not all preferences in art reflect equal taste or culture. Not all business procedures are equally well-advised. Not all poetry is equally inspired. Not all forms of government promote public welfare equally. Not all religious systems echo with equal fidelity the voice of God's Revelation through Jesus Christ. Not all religions are equally true and not all systems of thought, religious, political, or other, have equal rights before the face of truth.

This is unpopular preaching, but it cannot be too often repeated in these days so hostile to legitimate privileges and to inevitable and important inequalities. Not all persons are equally capable. Not all are equally courageous. Not all are equally competent. Not all are equally kind, equally honest, equally just, or equally God-fearing.

A democracy is in danger when essential equalities are neglected or denied. But a democracy is no less endangered when important differences of a natural or supernatural kind are forgotten or despised. Never forget the important ways in which all persons are equal with you, but be no less mindful of the many ways in which you must resist mere equality with others. Be conscious and proud of your legitimate differences. Recognize and implement your obligations to be better than people about you. It is no sin against political democracy to aspire after spiritual and intellectual aristocracy. On the contrary, the foundations of decent democracy must always be nourished by an aristocracy of the soul, the only aristocracy that the Gospels preach, and one that Jesus Christ made mandatory to those who profess to follow Him.

# Evading Taxes

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*Reprinted from SOCIAL ORDER\**

**"S**OUTH of the Loire we are no longer masters of the situation." This is no field report from a World War II battleground but an admission from beleaguered tax collectors in southern France who are waging a losing battle against the tax-evading followers of Pierre Poujade.

Recently Poujade carried his campaign into the Paris region, where 100,000 tradesmen and artisans cheered his plea that they pay no taxes until the government undertakes fiscal reforms. Among the reforms are elimination of penalties against tax dodgers, amnesty for past offenders, ending of inspections to detect tax frauds.

Poujade may not have the 800,000 followers he claims, but the editor of *La Vie Française*, René Sedillot, assured *New York Times Magazine* readers in October, 1953, that tax evasion is widespread in France. "The Frenchman enters and leaves the world a bad taxpayer" and, as a consequence, "has worn down

every regime through history." And why will a Frenchman who "wouldn't steal a centime from a neighbor steal from the government?" Because, says Sedillot, "every Frenchman lives for himself, not for the body politic."

It does not serve our purpose to go into the complexities of this tragic state of affairs, to weigh, for instance, the guilt of tax evaders against that of those who use France's numerous parties to win legal tax exemptions for themselves until the bulk of the burden is borne by the powerless.

But there is something in this situation worth pondering. The situation has been variously attributed to "individualism," to the idea that power is an instrument for exploiting people, to "centuries of conflict with tax collectors."

However, I believe another cause has contributed to this moral anarchy, namely, the view widely propounded over generations that the obligation to pay taxes does not

\* 3908 Westminster Pl., St. Louis 8, Mo., March, 1955

bind in conscience but only requires evaders to accept punishment when caught. Curiously enough, the arguments alleged in support of this freedom to evade are just about those Poujade screamed at his cheering followers in 1955: graft, waste, inefficiency. Another argument was that when so many (prompted by belief that revenues were wasted) evaded taxes, no individual could be bound in conscience to carry an unequal burden. Others argued that a secularist and atheist government, which knew nothing of conscience, could not intend to bind others under pain of sin.

Admittedly there have been times when general and ineradicable corruption has all but obliterated the public good of the people. Kings, at times, have gouged taxes from their people to support personal quarrels, expensive courts and mistresses. Other rulers adopted the vicious practice of "farming out" tax collecting to ruthless individuals who wrung as much wealth from the people as possible. The despised "publicans" of the Gospel were such men.

But if in recent times the Western world has not had such arbitrary rule nor been handicapped by its helplessness to root out abuses, do not promoters of freedom to evade taxes *disedify* (in the root meaning of the word)? When they make each aggrieved citizen his own tax

assessor, they open a road to anarchy. In this light we can well question whether it is not a tragic neglect not to urge positive, vigorous, communal action against corruption. The failure to stimulate citizens to sacrifice private gain for the sake of establishing good faith in the community actually helps us to bring about that deterioration of political order which gives excuse for anarchistic desertion of a government.

Whether the French situation is this bad, and whether moral teachers have actually contributed to this social sickness, I cannot positively say. But I am certain that it would be tragic if moral teachings based on an unhappy situation that evidently does not exist in the United States induced us to embrace such anti-social attitudes and practices.

Recently an American writer gave a qualified approval to the proposition that "many tax laws, as actually enacted, lack the binding force that would make it sinful to violate them." The basis of this claim was that "much revenue actually raised by taxation is unnecessary for the purpose for which it is intended and that much more is actually wasted or misappropriated by incompetent and unscrupulous public officials."

Note that the writer is talking explicitly about violation of tax law, i. e., *tax evasion*. We are not considering the many measures of *tax*

avoidance provided by the law itself which permit us to minimize taxable income or to use other methods of avoidance ("loopholes") that can be discovered in the most carefully drafted law. For purposes of simplification, our discussion is concerned only with Federal income taxes.

We cannot evaluate this writer's statement unless we fully appreciate one important principle concerning the morality of tax laws. That principle is that you cannot decide whether a given law binds in conscience or not by advancing arguments or authorities which *are based on experience elsewhere*. You must decide each case in the light of its own concrete situation. This means for us by a study of how taxes are levied and revenues used *here in the United States*.

It is my contention that an analysis of tax levies in this country, far from supporting the position mentioned above, shows it to be almost a libel.

#### FACTS BELIE STAND

Editorial duties in the recent past forced me to follow with close attention the Administration's efforts to shape up one year's tax program. As I waded through the mass of print on the budget and tax proposals and then through the Congressional debates on both measures, I was strongly impressed by

the amount of time and effort given to the job. As I reflected further on the quality of the effort, I wondered how much more could be required before one would be prepared to accept the outcome of these efforts as a law binding in conscience.

Through weeks and even months, the Administration made every effort, consulted numerous experts, to see that the budget included only justifiable items. Testimony pro and con was sought; anyone who wanted a hearing got it.

The same experts and witnesses appeared later before Congressional committees. Businessmen and trade associations told why certain taxes would hurt. Labor spokesmen urged reductions in the lower brackets. Congressmen took to radio and television to warn of evil consequences they professed to find in some measures. The *Congressional Record* grew fat as debates ran on. Columnists and editorialists found their way into the *Record's* supplement.

Despite the welter of disagreement, budget and tax programs had to be—and were—enacted. And in the showdown our representatives voted in our name a tax law they felt they could present to the people.

As I reflect on these efforts of executive and legislature, I ask myself where among men in organized society can you find a more reasonable exercise of true political prudence?

Their action was a prudential judgment. By that I mean a decision that is reached after due deliberation and consultation (and, in a democracy, after fair representation of affected interests). It is reached because it is the best judgment of authorized lawmakers about the proper means to achieve some objective required for the common good. When lawmakers thus exercise their authority under the necessity to act, and after using the information available to them, they are doing all that reasonable men can require.

Their collective judgment may have been mistaken. Had the voices of the best informed been heard or the exigencies of party politics or the stubbornness of human wills been less effective, ways to cut taxes might have appeared and possible unfortunate consequences of some taxes might have been better appraised. But prudence does not rule out the possibility of error and human frailty. The best of legislators will at times lean with the winds of pressure. And in that admixture of human motives which seems inevitable in human conduct, something less than heroic uprightness will appear. But we dare not set our legislatures a standard of perception or of integrity that can be

expected only of a Congress of Angelic Intelligences.

From all this it follows that we have in our tax enactments the very essence of law—an ordination of reason for the sake of the common good. Here is verified that inner necessity between an end (the common good) and means (taxes duly proportioned to a reasonable budget). Authorities have legislated the best end-means relationship humanly discoverable under the circumstances. Nothing more is needed to bind conscience. It sees a moral necessity in the enactment. The will embraces the necessity presented to it.

#### NECESSITY MAKES OBLIGATION

It is sometimes argued that laws cannot bind in conscience unless legislators so *intend*. This argument assumes that when they do not so intend, the only sanction is the penalty attached to violation. But this simply cannot be so.<sup>1</sup> Moral obligation arises not from another human will but from the necessary connection between the line of conduct required by law (here, paying taxes) and achievement of the common good.<sup>2</sup>

If the careful consideration which precedes a tax enactment does not

<sup>1</sup> On the whole problem of penal law, see the scholarly treatment by Thomas E. Davitt, S.J., *The Nature of Law*, Herder, St. Louis, 1951, 274 pp.

<sup>2</sup> Because the tax ordinance is a definitive provision of means to the promotion of the common good, it is justice which immediately commands the taxpayer's response. Ultimately, of course, this obligation involves obedience to God, the divine Law-Giver.

produce a law binding in conscience, it is hard to conceive where such a law may be found. This, at least, may be said: the burden of proof that lies on those who presume to question the prudential judgment their government makes is indeed grave.

One final point: legislators do not pretend to have achieved the *best possible law*. Their only claim is that it is the best possible under the circumstances. They hope to improve it as they gain experience.<sup>3</sup>

#### OTHER REMEDIES

*Improving justice through better tax laws* is the right of the aggrieved citizen. Let him organize a group, exercise his franchise, pound out angry blasts on his typewriter. Let those who believe they see mistakes (and the way to correct them) exercise their responsibility to build public opinion and inform their representatives. If theirs be the voice of reason, it will eventually be heard. They may have to await political developments. Their suggestions may come out twisted and transformed as they are fitted into the many-sided complex of the nation's social and political purposes. But they will be heard.

Now we can look briefly at the three specific grounds on which writ-

ers justify tax evasion: 1) taxes go to grafters; 2) they are lost in waste and inefficiency; 3) they are levied for unreasonable purposes.

1. Any private citizen evading taxes on the score of graft must at least be prepared to answer such questions as these: How much of his tax burden results from graft? How much graft is there? Does it amount to two per cent of our \$62 billion tax levy? Has any investigation suggested it is even one per cent?

If the amount of graft is relatively small, is he still justified in evading taxes on this score? If so, how much may he dodge?

Moreover, as we saw earlier, there are available channels for citizens to make effective protest and initiate remedy. The minority is always alert for justification to cry, "Throw the rascals out." And an administration wants to make good its promises to economize and to eliminate abuses. Besides, the overwhelming majority in both parties are genuinely concerned to give us good government.

2. The present Republican Administration has clearly demonstrated that most of us considerably overestimated the amount of waste and incompetence in government. Remember the campaign promises that taxes would be cut by twenty per

<sup>3</sup> The common good (and legislation to achieve it) requires by its nature continuous improvement and development. On this point, see Johannes Messner, *Social Ethics*, Herder, St. Louis, 1949, pp. 124-34.



cent as the "fat" of the previous Administration's wasteful ways was worked out? Yet, the new Administration has had to resort to some debatable cuts in order to make a showing of economy.

This remark should not be construed as a criticism of Mr. Eisenhower. It is offered as evidence that there is less waste than some moralists assume. It is also worth repeating just one principle from our general discussion: is it reasonable to set up a standard for government that the world of business or education would not care to be measured by?

3. The third reason alleged to justify tax evasion is that taxes are levied for unreasonable purposes. Whatever be the purpose for which taxes are raised, few will question that the American people bear a heavy tax burden. Obviously the desirable public policy will—and should—be to leave as much money as possible in private pocketbooks. Moreover, there is no question that at any given moment we are being taxed for some purposes which intelligent persons can demonstrate will not in the long run promote the common welfare. Finally, it is true that some kinds of taxes have unfortunate results. All this we have already said, and the essential answer we have already seen. Whatever the defects, we must acknowledge, in view of the legislators' care-

ful efforts, that our law is the best possible *under the circumstances*.

But there is also a question of fact to raise against the moralist who justifies tax evasion on this score. Again I can cite Mr. Eisenhower's experience. Supporters of the Republican Party may still be as sure as they used to be that the Democratic Administration had been taxing us foolishly, or for purposes that were "globaloney," or that lead to Socialism.

But totally new light has been cast on this assumption as the new Administration has striven mightily—but unsuccessfully—to reduce the budget in any significant degree in any direction except the defense effort. Confronted with this judgment of an Administration dedicated to tax reductions, how can any individual easily assert that certain measures are so defective or pernicious as to justify tax evasion?

This road leads to anarchy. A national magazine recently declared that the capital-gains tax is confiscation. A popular columnist decries foreign aid as "operation rathole." People in the East might argue that the Far West gets too much money for dams. Conservatives everywhere used to quote Mr. Eisenhower's claim that TVA is Socialism. Some Catholics argue that they are unfairly taxed to support public schools, which they don't use. And so it goes, on and on.

Which of these propositions justifies tax evasion? If any one, why not all?

Or consider a somewhat different problem. There are good arguments for and against the fairness of the effects of certain taxes. Take one recent debate. Many have declared that taxes on dividends should be cut in order to re-establish satisfactory incentives. But just as many authorities argued that incentives were adequate, at least in view of the revenues needed to build up strength at home and abroad to assure lasting peace, and they quoted figures for their stand.

Meanwhile, Senator Douglas and others were voicing the arguments of trade unions, New Dealers and others to the effect that tax reductions in lower income brackets would give the faltering economy a "shot-in-the-arm" through increased consumer spending. Again, equal

authority was warning that such a move would be disastrous.

In view of this welter of opposing convictions, one can only ask where we would end up if each one takes it upon himself to decide whether the worth of certain budget items merits his support or leaves him free to evade some part of his taxes.

### CONCLUSION

This article is only an attempt to present certain principles too little considered in discussions of the obligation to pay taxes. I recognize that even against the weight of my argument those who disagree may rest their freedom on the support of recognized authorities. But it cannot too emphatically be insisted on that no theologian is a valid authority *unless he is talking about a situation identifiable as the equivalent of what we have seen exists here in the United States.*



### *On Dealing with Communists*

There is only one force that threatens the peace of the world today and that is the Communist conspiracy. Despite recent attempts by propaganda to convince the free world that the Soviets believe in the policy of live and let live, we must be guided by the facts which show that up to now the Kremlin has given no concrete evidence that its lust for power will ever be satisfied short of complete world domination.—*From the Labor Day Statement of AFL President George Meany.*

# Rebirth of the Jesuits in America

HENRI J. WIESEL, S.J.

*Address at a private gathering, New York City, October 11, 1955*

**I**F YOU drive down Route 301, south from Baltimore or Washington, you will in due time pass through the Maryland town of La Plata, the county seat of Charles County. Continue on your drive a few miles until Bel Alton shows up on the sign posts, then, turning right, head down toward the river. In a few minutes you will be in full view of the broad Potomac. Stop at the brick church which hugs the brow of the hill, and rest awhile. Go in for a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and also to see what St. Ignatius Church looks like. A plain country church it is with a balcony on three sides originally set apart for the slaves. The corner-stone is crumbling under the wear of weather and time. Be patient and slowly you will be able to read that "John, the Bishop of Baltimore, on August 7, 1798 blessed and put in place the corner-stone of this church dedicated to God and St. Ignatius."

It is a pleasant-looking edifice as country churches go. There is nothing worthy of architectural note about it. Homey, I would term it,

perhaps because it is attached to and is part of St. Thomas Manor, a term which has come down from colonial days and used to designate the home of the lord or owner of the estate. However, should any Jesuit priest or Brother visit that church this year of 1955, his heart will beat a little faster. Something will "catch in his throat," for he will be standing at the birthplace of the Society of Jesus in America.

Let me modify that and say that St. Ignatius Church is the spot where the Society began to live again after years of non-existence. I might have written "years of underground." That would not, however, be quite true, for "going underground" means to continue to live and work and function in the same manner, even though considerably restricted. The "Jesuit Underground" which began July 21, 1773, when Pope Clement XIV decreed the Society of Jesus was to cease to live, could mean and did mean that its members continued to labor and to pray, to preach and teach and instruct, to baptize and absolve and con-

secrete. However, these holy duties they performed not as Jesuits but as diocesan priests. They performed them, though, always with the hope of a resurrection. And that resurrection actually did come to pass in St. Ignatius Church, St. Thomas Manor, Maryland.

### SUPPRESSION OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

Hence it is that while celebrating with their brethren throughout the world the 4th centenary of their holy Founder's death, American Jesuits cannot forget this other anniversary closely connected with that of St. Ignatius. I refer of course to the sesquicentennial of the reestablishment of the Society of Jesus here in America. Let me tell it briefly, for in the telling you will see what the Society and St. Ignatius meant to a mere handful of priests, formerly members of the Society, and now by an act of suppression cast adrift in the new world.

As the Mission of Maryland at that time formed part of the London District, it devolved upon Bishop Richard Challoner to notify the Jesuits in America of the total dissolution of the Order. The decree of suppression had been ordered into execution in such a way that it was to take effect only when it had been communicated by the Bishop to the members of the Society within his jurisdiction. This

he did by the following letter dated October 6, 1773:

To Messrs. the Missioners in Maryland and Pennsylvania:

To obey the orders which I have received . . . I notify to you by this Breve of the total dissolution of the Society of Jesus, and send withal a form of declaration of your obedience and submission to which you are all desired to subscribe, as your brethren have done here (England); and send me back the formula with the subscription of you all, as I am to send them up to Rome.

In due course they subscribed to the orders with obedience and submission. A photographic copy of this submission is reproduced in Fr. Thomas Hughes' masterful work, *The History of the Society of Jesus in North America*. As you read it you cannot help but contrast that scene of submission with the one of independence when other Americans affixed their signatures to a parchment in Philadelphia.

Here is what these religious forefathers signed:

We, the undersigned, heretofore known as priests of the Congregation of Clerks Regular, known as the Society of Jesus, missionaries in the district of London, Maryland and Pennsylvania, being notified of the publication of an Apostolic Letter of our Holy Father, Pope Clement XIV, dated 21 July, 1773, by which Letter the Holy Father suppresses entirely and abolishes the aforesaid Society throughout the known world, and furthermore, whereas said Letter bids us priests of the aforesaid So-

ciety to submit ourselves as secular clergy to the government and authority of the Bishops, we, obeying fully and sincerely the abovementioned Letter, and humbly acquiescing in every way to the suppression of the aforesaid Society, do subject ourselves as secular priests to the jurisdiction and government of the Most Reverend Bishop.

There were some 20 Jesuits in the Maryland Mission at that time. Most were Englishmen, some few were Germans. Quite a few native Americans had entered the Society but they had been assigned to posts in Belgium and England.

So these Missioners became secular priests. After all the intervening years it is extremely difficult for our age and generation to sense their feelings of sorrow, of ruin, of disillusionment. Although forbidden under severe penalties to condemn the fatal decree or even discuss its injustice, they could, and did, as we know from letters written through those years, give expression to their sorrow and grief. Fr. John Carroll, later to be the first U.S. Bishop, wrote to his brother:

I am not and perhaps never shall be recovered from the shock of this dreadful intelligence. The greatest blessing which in my estimation I could receive from God would be immediate death.

Father Mosley, writing to his sister in England, said:

Our dissolution is known through the world. It's in every newspaper,

which makes me ashamed to show my face. I can say now what I have never before thought of—I am willing now to retire and quit my post, as I believe most of my brethren are. A retired private life would suit me best. We are now like dispersed sheep, or disbanded soldiers. What man could live in such a confused, distracted state without some danger to himself?

It is well worth noting as a tribute to their sense of duty and fidelity that although after the suppression the missionaries in the Maryland and Pennsylvania fields were no longer bound to remain where they had been placed by their Jesuit superiors, and although the separation from the mother country was impending through the Revolution, not one of the native-born Englishmen abandoned his post. There were 9 English Fathers, and to a man they died in harness on the trying fields of the Maryland Mission. Most of them were gone to God before the official reestablishment of the Society in 1814. And in passing it is of interest to know that the Jesuits still retain charge of many of those churches and parishes over which they had care in 1773.

One thing the suppression failed utterly to accomplish, namely, to stamp out of the hearts and lives of its former members a deeply rooted feeling for and love of the Society, for its way of life, its rules and traditions. Love of their Saintly Founder had been born and bred in the bone. This traditional love is

the only explanation I can think of for the tenacity with which they firmly held to the thin thread of hope that some day, somehow, somewhere, a resurrection would come, that God in His wisdom and mercy would bring about a correction of what was wrong, that justice would supplant injustice, and that at long last a reestablishment and reapprobation of the Rules and Constitutions would be proclaimed through the world.

It is not suprising, therefore, to read in a letter written in 1800, 17 years after the suppression, from St. Thomas Manor in Maryland to Fr. Marmaduke Stone in England: "Knowing your desire for the reestablishment of the Society of Jesus, and of our one day being reunited as Brethren under the Institute of our holy Founder, St. Ignatius, we address you on this important subject." The letter inquires about the Institute of the Faith of Jesus, a new organization forming at that time, and also to say that they had heard rumors of a reestablishment in England. "We, the undersigned, are met here to consider on this important subject. Our other brethren have not been able to attend, yet we have little doubt of their sincere concurrence." The letter ends with the time-honored A.M.D.G. (To the Greater Glory of God), and carries the signatures of Robert Molyneux,

Joseph Doyne, John Bolton, Henry Pile, Charles Sewall, Sylvester Boardman and Charles Neale.

Listen to this touching note in a letter of Bishop Leonard Neale, Coadjutor of Baltimore:

All the members of the Society here are now grown old, the youngest being now past 54. Death therefore holds out his threatening rod, and excites us to redoubled wishes for the reestablishment of the Society on which the welfare of this country seems so much to depend.

And again the same Bishop Neale:

For God's sake relieve me of my distressed situation—he was decrying the lack of information from Europe). We enjoy good health, but the members of our Old Society are aged and worn down with continual labor. How long they may subsist depends upon the hand of God which holds the thread of life.

Fr. Charles Sewall, who lies buried in the corner of the graveyard at St. Thomas Manor, wrote to his brother in England, 1803, "God grant that I may live to renew my vows in the Society." And again in 1805:

As soon as the Society is reorganized here I will write to you again. In the meantime I thank God for having preserved a few of us at least so long as this, and I hope we shall live to see the happy day of our reentrance.

The record shows that he died within three months after that happy day.

Through these few excerpts and many other letters there runs a sus-

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tained expression of love for the Society. These ex-Jesuits continually referred to the old days as "Our Old Society." They felt in heart and soul they still belonged, and were still children of their Mother, the Society. How well they must have been trained as novices. How fervently they must have made the Spiritual Exercises. How faithful they must have been through the years to the rules and the spirit of religious life.

Finally, after 21 long years of waiting, word reached the Mission from Russia, from Fr. Gabriel Gruber, the Father General of that small part of the Society which had never been suppressed, that

... anyone, no matter how far from Russia he dwelt, was free to become affiliated with the Society. ... In view of all this I accept and receive into the Society all that solicit to be united to us, whether or not they were of the old Society.

Accordingly, a meeting of the former Jesuits was called by Bishops Carroll and Neale, held on May 9, 1805 at St. Thomas Manor. The minutes of that meeting record the presence of John Bolton, Charles Sewall, Sylvester Boorman, Charles Neale and Baker Brooke. They continue:

After prayers the Bishop of Baltimore began by reading the letter of Father General. The Bishop added that the whole subject being now before them, each one was to determine for himself the course he had to pur-

sue, either of uniting himself immediately with the Society in Russia, or waiting until a public Bull was issued authorizing the Society's reestablishment. The matter being thus proposed, and each one desiring to consult his own heart, the meeting was adjourned to the following day. . . .

On the following day "they all expressed their wish to unite with the Society at once, and announced that Fr. Robert Molyneux authorized them to declare it to be his desire." Under the authority of the General's letter, Bishop Carroll named Fr. Molyneux superior of the American Jesuits, his appointment being dated June 27, 1805.

Finally, on the Sunday within the octave of the Assumption, August 18, 1805, Fr. Robert Molyneux and Fr. Charles Sewall renewed their Jesuit vows in the little parish church of St. Ignatius at St. Thomas Manor, thus reviving the existence of the Society of Jesus in the United States. On that same occasion, Fr. Charles Neale, who had been only a novice in the pre-suppression Society, pronounced his vows for the first time.

Do you wonder now that this Church of St. Ignatius is precious to American Jesuits? Twice badly damaged by fire, twice restored, it still stands at the edge of the bluff overlooking the Potomac. It is the humble birthplace of the reborn Society in the United States.



# Catholics and the United Nations

THE REV. JOSEPH D. MUNIER

*Text of the sermon preached at the Solemn Mass commemorating the tenth anniversary session of the United Nations at St. Mary's Cathedral, San Francisco, June 19, 1955*

**T**EN years ago, within a few steps of this Cathedral Church, the United Nations was founded amid hopes and prayers for world peace. We all realize that these ten years since the signing of the UN Charter have not been free from war and terror and disappointment. We all realize that, instead of seeing the dawn of a secure peace, the world continues to live in the uneasy and dangerous darkness of the cold war. Some people would have us believe that the United Nations has been a monumental farce; others would have us believe that it has been a monumental force for world peace. On this the eve of the Tenth Anniversary Session of the UN General Assembly, the fairness of our appraisal and the sincerity of our prayers must depend on an understanding of the mind of the Catholic Church concerning this international instrument for peace.

In the first place, what is the Catholic teaching on international organization in general? All the

Popes from Leo XIII to our present gloriously reigning Pius XII have consistently taught that an international organization is one of the prime requisites for world peace. Pope Leo XIII enthusiastically supported the Hague Conferences from which came the International Court of Arbitration. Pope Benedict XV, in his famous peace proposals of 1917, suggested an international institution for compulsory arbitration, and then, after the Armistice, supported the idea of the League of Nations. The same policy was pursued by his successor, Pope Pius XI. Since his elevation, our present Holy Father has repeatedly pointed to the necessity of a juridical international institution to guarantee the fulfillment of treaty conditions and to preserve the peace.

Turning specifically to the United Nations, Pope Pius XII has announced his realistic acceptance of the UN as a partial realization at least of an international community. As early as 1948, the Holy



Father expressed the hope that the UN, after eliminating the weaknesses stemming from its origin, which was of necessity a solidarity in war, would become "the full and faultless expression of international solidarity for peace" (Christmas Message of 1948). Moreover, the Pope has appointed official observers to UNESCO, has accepted the membership of the Holy See in the Advisory Committee of the UN High Commission for Refugees, and has made contributions to the UN Technical Assistance Program and to the UN Children's Fund.

In the light of this evidence, the Catholic attitude toward the UN clearly repudiates the resurgent isolationist attacks which are now shouting "Get the USA out of the UN, and the UN out of the USA." No genuine Catholic can be either a pious individualist or a righteous isolationist, because such a person, whether he intends it or not, is an international anarchist who has lost faith in the fundamental Christian doctrines which underlie international organization, namely, the doctrines of the unity of the human race and the brotherhood of man.

### CATHOLIC TEACHING

Having established the positive Catholic attitude toward international organization for peace, we must now review Catholic teaching on the possibility of unity and peace

in and through such an organization. In his latest Christmas message, Pope Pius XII states:

The present co-existence in fear has only two possible prospects before it—either it will raise itself to a co-existence in fear of God, and thence to a truly peaceful living together, inspired and protected by the divine moral order, or else it will shrivel more and more into a frozen paralysis of international life, the grave dangers of which are even now foreseeable.

According to the Pope, co-existence in fear of God is co-existence in truth, and he feels that a bridge of truth can be built between the human beings of the free world who strive to preserve the natural law and the human beings of the Communist world who have been forced by their government to abandon the natural law. The first step, says the Pope, must be taken by the statesmen of the free world, and this applies very pointedly to UN delegates. These statesmen must overcome their excessive timidity in proclaiming the truth, and with greater confidence in themselves, they must give proof of a firmer courage in foiling the maneuvers of the obscure forces which are opposed to truth, to justice, to charity and to the spirit.

But while the Pope makes fear of God and respect for the moral law essential to any organized effort for peace, he also makes it quite clear

that the world union of nations cannot be built on the foundation of a common religion or in terms of one religious vision. Some eager spokesmen against the UN keep saying that it is utterly hopeless without unity in the Christian Faith. These cynics try to be more Catholic than the Pope. Our highest teacher, while working and praying for that ideal unity of all men in the Mystical Body of Christ, remains a realist, and reminds us that even God permits the existence of religions other than the one He Himself has established, and thus in a world organization, we and our governments have the obligation to practice religious tolerance (Discourse of December 6, 1953).

Besides co-existence in truth, Catholic teaching insists that the corporal works of mercy are indispensable to unity and peace in the world community. The Holy Father says that the relief of tensions caused by hunger, sickness and poverty must be the immediate aim of the Christian will for peace. The Pope himself has set the example by personal cooperation with, and by personal contributions to, those specialized agencies of the UN which are actively promoting economic, social and cultural welfare in the so-called underdeveloped areas of the world. Men of all nations can agree at least on one thing, namely, the recognition of human

suffering from lack of food, shelter and medical care. More power, then, and certainly more appropriations to the UN specialized agencies—to the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, to the UN Food and Agricultural Organization, and to the others. It might be well for some people to wake up to the fact that Communism is not the only obstruction between mankind and a secure peace. If all the Communists of every race were miraculously converted or eliminated during this coming week, the world revolution for liberation from misery would not stop. The hungry, sick and desperate millions of the world would still disturb our peace, and with every right.

#### CHARTER REVISIONS

Beyond these fundamentals of Catholic teaching on world peace, the Pope and the U.S. Bishops have urged the UN to banish from its institutions and statutes obvious weaknesses and deficiencies. This can only mean a strong recommendation for a Charter Review Conference as soon as possible, a Constituent Assembly to eliminate the glaring structural and moral defects of the UN. The Holy Father has not specified these defects, for that is the duty of the Catholic delegates, who are in a position to apply the principles. From these principles, however, certain obvious Charter

revisions suggest themselves, namely, to promote recognition of God and the moral law, to promote disarmament, to strengthen the world court with compulsory jurisdiction, and the General Assembly with real legislative power, and finally to eliminate the veto power in its present form.

These reforms can be realized sooner or later if men of good-will, sustained by the hopeful optimism of our Holy Father, continue to pray and to trust in the Providence of God. "If ever an assembly of men, gathered at a critical crossroads of history, needed the help of prayer, it is the Assembly of the United Nations," Pope Pius told a group of American pilgrims back in 1948. And this month our own Archbishop has directed that in all churches and chapels of the Archdiocese prayers be offered for the success of the United Nations.

Many of us have been praying

for peace for a long time. Could it be that we have been praying with shallow glibness, because our prayer has had so little to do with our inner lives, with our own little wars at home, at work and in our neighborhood? When the Mother of God appeared at Fatima 38 years ago and foretold the evils of our day, she suggested that our prayer for peace must be a creative instrument, a genuine revolution, that spiritual revolution that seeks God's will in our personal decisions, that questions every selfish motive, that searches the soul for willingness to make sacrifices for others. At this Holy Mass of petition for peace, may our prayers be powerful and revolutionary, as we beg God to bless the representatives of the human family at the United Nations, as we beg God to keep them honest and truthful and sincere, as we beg God to show them the way to a lasting and secure peace.



### *Plight of Schools in South Africa*

The Government of South Africa has withdrawn 25 per cent of the aid to our schools; it proposes to withdraw all aid completely.

The position of South African Catholics will then be comparable to that of Catholics in the United States in that they must support their own schools without any aid whatsoever from the government. To these natives, money for the necessities of life is scarce while extra money is almost non-existent.—MISSION, September-October, 1955.

## Documentation

# The Church and History

POPE PIUS XII

*Address by His Holiness to nearly 2,000 delegates to the Tenth International Congress of Historical Studies, Rome, September 7, 1955*

**M**ANY of you have wanted to come to pay Us a visit on the occasion of the 10th International Congress of Historical Studies. We welcome you with great pleasure in the conviction that this event is of great significance. Never, perhaps, has so distinguished a group of history scholars met in Rome, the seat of the Church and the home of the Pope.

We in no way feel, moreover, that We are meeting unknown persons or strangers. Some of you, in fact, are among the thousands of historians who have worked in the Vatican Library or Archives, open for exactly 75 years. Besides this, your activities as researchers and professors will have given to most of you, if not to all of you, an opportunity of entering in some way into contact with the Catholic Church and the Papacy.

Although history is an ancient science, it was necessary to wait until recent centuries and the development of historical criticism before it attained its present degree of perfection. Thanks to the rigorous demands of its methods and the untiring zeal of its specialists, you can rejoice at knowing the past in greater detail and at judging it with greater accuracy than any of your predecessors. This fact still further emphasizes the importance We attach to your presence here.

History ranks itself among the sciences which have a close relationship with the Catholic Church. This is true to such a degree that We were unable to welcome you just now without mentioning the fact almost involuntarily.

The Catholic Church is herself an historical fact. Like a mighty mountain-range she bestrides the history of the past 2,000 years. Whatever attitude a person may adopt toward her, it is impossible to avoid her.

The judgments people have made concerning her are quite varied; they range from complete acceptance to the most decisive rejection. But whatever the final verdict of the historian, whose task is to observe and explain facts, events and circumstances—insofar as possible as they actually happened—the Church believes that she can in any case expect him to inform himself of the historical consciousness the Church has of herself. That is to say, she expects him to inform himself on the way she considers

herself as an historical fact, and on the way she regards her relationship to the history of mankind.

We should like to say a word about this consciousness the Church has of herself by citing facts, circumstances and concepts that seem to Us to have the most basic significance.

### CHURCH, AN HISTORICAL FACT

To begin with, We should like to answer an objection that presents itself, so to speak, at the very outset. Christianity, it has been said, and is still being said, necessarily takes a hostile position in regard to history because it sees in it a manifestation of evil and sin. Catholicism and historicism, therefore, are antithetical concepts. Let Us first remark that an objection expressed in this way considers history and historicism as equivalent conceptions. In this it is wrong. The term "historicism" denotes a philosophic system which perceives in all spiritual reality, in the knowledge of truth, in religion, morality and law, only change and evolution. Consequently it rejects all that is permanent, eternally valid and absolute. Such a system is assuredly incompatible with the Catholic conception of the world and, in general, with any religion which recognizes a personal God.

The Catholic Church knows that all events take place according to the will or permission of Divine Providence and that God attains His objectives in history. As the great St. Augustine said with classic brevity, what God proposes "is done, is brought about and, even though it be done gradually, it is done inevitably" (*Enarratio in Ps. 109 n. 9—Migne P. L., t. 37, col. 1452*). God is truly the Lord of history.

This statement in itself has already answered the above-mentioned objection. No opposition can be discovered between Christianity and history in the sense that history is only an emanation or manifestation of evil. The Church has never taught such a doctrine. Since Christian antiquity and the patristic age, and most especially at the time of the spiritual struggle with Protestantism and Jansenism, she has taken a clear position on the side of nature. She says regarding nature that it has not been corrupted by sin, that it has remained inwardly intact even in fallen man. She says that men before Christianity and men who are not Christians could and can perform good and honest acts, even excluding the fact that all men—even those who lived before the Christian era—are under the influence of Christ's grace.

The Church willingly recognizes great and good realities even if they existed before herself and outside of her domain. St. Augustine, upon whom her opponents often rely by falsely interpreting his *City of God*, who did not himself hide his pessimism, is also absolutely clear. To the tribune and imperial notary Flavius Marcellinus, to whom he dedicated that great work, he wrote:

For God, in the wealthy and glorious empire of the Romans, has shown how much civic virtues are worth even without the true religion. He has shown this in

such a way that it might be understood that with this (true religion) added, men become citizens of another city, whose king is truth, whose law is charity and whose mode is eternity (*Ep. 138, N. 17.—Migne P. L. t. 33, col. 533*).

St. Augustine expressed in these words the constant opinion of the Church.

Let Us now speak of the Church herself as an historical fact. At the same time that she fully asserts her divine origin and supernatural character, the Church is aware that she entered into human history as an historical fact. Her Divine Founder, Jesus Christ, is an historical person. His life, death and resurrection are historical facts. It sometimes happens that even those who deny the divinity of Christ admit His resurrection because it is, in their understanding of the word, too well attested historically. Whoever would like to deny it would have to wipe out all of ancient history, for none of its facts is better proven than the resurrection of Christ.

The mission and development of the Church are historical facts. Here in Rome it is fitting to cite SS. Peter and Paul. Paul, even from a purely historical point of view, belongs among humanity's most remarkable figures. As for the Apostle Peter and his position in the Church of Christ, although the monumental proof of Peter's residence and death in Rome has no essential importance for the Catholic Faith, We nevertheless have had widely-known excavations carried out under the Basilica. Their method is approved by (historical) criticism. Their result—the discovery of Peter's tomb under the cupola, just beneath the present Papal altar—was admitted by the great majority of critics. Even the most severe skeptics were impressed by what the excavations brought to light. We have reason to believe, moreover, that later research and study will permit the acquisition of still new and valuable knowledge.

The origins of Christianity and the Catholic Church are historical facts, ascertained and proven in time and in space. Of that the Church is quite aware.

She also knows that her mission, although by its nature and its goals it belongs to the religious and moral domain, situated in the beyond and eternity, nevertheless penetrates to the very heart of human history. Always and everywhere, by unceasingly adapting herself to the circumstances of time and place, she seeks to model persons, individuals and, as far as possible, all individuals according to the laws of Christ, thus attaining the moral basis for social life. The object of the Church is man, naturally good, imbued, ennobled and strengthened by the truth and grace of Christ.

The Church wants to make men "established in their inviolable integrity as images of God; men proud of their personal dignity and of their wholesome freedom; men justly jealous of their equality with their fellow creatures in all that concerns the most intimate depths of human dignity; men solidly attached to their land and their tradition." That is the intention of the Church as We expressed it in Our address of February 20, 1946, when We conferred birettas on the new Cardinals.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Catholic Mind, XLIV, 1000 (April, 1946), pp. 193-203.

We might add that in the present century as in the past century when the problems of the family, society, the state and the social order have assumed an ever growing and even primary importance, the Church has done everything in her power to contribute to the solution of such problems and has had, We believe, some success. The Church is persuaded, however, that she can do no more effective work in this sphere than to continue to form men in the fashion We have described.

To attain its goals the Church functions not only as an ideological system. Without doubt she is described as such when people use the expression "Catholicism," which is neither her own customary usage nor a fully adequate term. She is far more than a simple ideological system. She is a reality, like visible nature, the people or the state. She is a living organism with her own ends and her own principle of life. Unchangeable in the constitution and structure her Divine Founder Himself gave to her, she has accepted and still accepts those elements she needs or deems useful for her development and activity: men, human institutions, philosophical and cultural inspirations, political forces and social institutions, ideas, principles and activities.

The Church, in extending herself throughout the world, has also undergone various changes in the course of the centuries. But in her essence she has always remained the same because the many elements she received were from the beginning made subject to the same basic faith. The Church may be incredibly broad. She may show herself as inflexibly strict. If one considers the whole of her history, he will see that she has been both one and the other with a sure instinct for what was fitting for various peoples and the whole of mankind. She has rejected all overly naturalistic movements, which have in some way been contaminated by a spirit of moral license, as well as gnostic tendencies, falsely spiritual and puritanical.

The history of canon law up to the code currently in force furnishes a good number of significant proofs of this. Take, for example, the ecclesiastical legislation on marriage and the recent Papal statements on all aspects of the questions of the married state and the family. You will find there one example, among many others, of the way in which the Church thinks and works.

By virtue of an analogous principle, she has regularly intervened in the domain of public life in order to guarantee a just balance between right and duty on the one hand, and law and freedom on the other. Political authority has never had an advocate more worthy of trust than the Catholic Church, for the Church bases the authority of the state on the will of the Creator and on the commandment of God. Because she attributes a religious value to public authority, the Church is assuredly opposed to arbitrariness on the part of the state and to all forms of tyranny. Our predecessor, Leo XIII, in his encyclical *Christian Constitution of States (Immortale Dei)* of November 1, 1885, wrote:

And in truth whatever in the state is of chief avail for the common welfare; whatever has been usefully established to curb the license of rulers who are opposed to the true interests of the people, or to keep in check the leading author-



ities from unwarrantably interfering in municipal or family affairs; whatever tends to uphold the honor, manhood and equal rights of individual citizens; of all these things, as the monuments of past ages bear witness, the Catholic Church has always been the originator, the promoter or guardian. (*Leonis XIII P.M. Acta*, ed. Romana, vol. 5, 1886, p. 142).

When Leo XIII wrote these words 70 years ago, his eyes turned toward the past, he was not able to see to what tests the immediate future was to put them. Today We believe we can say that during these 70 years the Church has shown herself faithful to her past and even that she has gone far beyond the statements of Leo XIII.

We have now arrived at a point where We should like to deal with two problems which merit very special attention: the relations between Church and State and between the Church and culture.

### CHURCH AND STATE

In the pre-Christian era public authority, the State, was as competent in the religious domain as in profane matters. The Catholic Church was aware that her Divine Founder had transferred to her the sphere of religion, the religious and moral direction of men to the fullest extent and independent of the power of the State. Since that time there has existed a history of relations between Church and State and this history has strongly attracted the attention of scholars.

Leo XIII, so to speak, expressed in a formula the proper nature of these relations, of which he gives an enlightening explanation in his encyclicals *Diuturnum Illud* (1881), *Immortale Dei* (1885) and *Sapientiae Christianae* (1890). The two powers, Church and State, are sovereign. Their nature, as the ends they pursue, fix the limits within which they govern "by their own right" (*"iure proprio"*). As the State, the Church also possesses a sovereign right to all she needs, even the material means, to reach her goal. "Whatever, therefore, in things human is of a sacred character, whatever belongs either of its own nature or by reason of the end to which it is referred to the salvation of souls or to the worship of God, is subject to the power and the judgment of the Church" (*Immortale Dei—Acts*, Roman edition, vol. 5, pp. 127-8).

While Church and State are independent powers, they should not because of this ignore one another and still less fight one another. It is far more in conformity to nature and the Divine Will if they cooperate in mutual understanding, since their activities apply to the same subject, namely, to the Catholic citizen. Certainly cases of conflict remain possible, and when the laws of the State do harm to divine law, the Church has a moral duty to oppose them.

It can be said that with the exception of a few centuries—for all the first 1,000 years as for the last 400—the statement of Leo XIII reflects more or less clearly the mind of the Church. Even during the intervening period, moreover, there were representatives of the doctrine of the Church—perhaps even a majority—who shared the same opinion.

When our predecessor Boniface VIII on April 30, 1303, told the envoys



of the German King Albert of Hapsburg "... as the moon has no light apart from that which it receives from the sun, so no earthly power has anything except what it receives from the ecclesiastical power. . . . All powers . . . are from Christ and from Us, as the Vicar of Jesus Christ . . ." (*Mon. Germ. Hist.* LL. sect. IV, tom. IV, part. 1, pp. 139, 19-32)—it was a case of perhaps the most emphatic statement of the so-called medieval idea of the relations between the spiritual and temporal powers. From this idea men like Boniface drew logical conclusions. But even for them there was normally only the question here of the transmission of authority as such, not of the designation of its holder, as Boniface himself stated at the Consistory of June 24, 1302 (cfr. C. E. Bulaeus, *History of the University of Paris*, t. IV, Paris, 1688, pp. 31-3). This medieval conception was conditioned by the times. Those who know its sources will probably admit that it would undoubtedly have been even more astonishing had it not appeared.

They will also concede, perhaps, that, in accepting battles such as the one concerning investiture, the Church defended highly spiritual and moral ideals and that, from the time of the Apostles to our own day, her efforts to remain independent of the civil power have always looked to safeguarding the freedom of religious convictions.

Let no one object that the Church herself scorns the personal convictions of those who do not think as she does. The Church has considered and still considers that the willing abandonment of the true faith is a sin. When, beginning about 1200, such a defection entailed penal proceedings on the part of the spiritual as well as the temporal power, it was only to avoid the destruction of the religious and ecclesiastical unity of the West. To non-Catholics the Church applied the principle contained in the Code of Canon Law: "*Ad amplectendam fidem catholicam nemo invitatus cogatur*"—"Let no one be forced against his will to embrace the Catholic Faith" (Can. 1351). She believes that their convictions constitute a reason, although not always the principal one, for tolerance. We have already dealt with the subject in Our address of December 6, 1953, to the Catholic lawyers of Italy.<sup>2</sup>

The historian should not forget that, while the Church and State have known hours and years of conflict, there were also from the time of Constantine the Great until the contemporary era, and even recently, tranquil periods, often quite long ones, during which they collaborated with full understanding in the education of the same people. The Church does not hide the fact that in principle she considers such collaboration normal and that she regards the unity of the people in the true religion and the unanimity of action between herself and the State as an ideal.

But she also knows that for some time events have been evolving in a rather different direction, that is to say, toward the multiplicity of religious beliefs and conceptions of life within the same national community, where Catholics are a more or less strong minority. It may be interesting and surprising for the historian to encounter in the United States of America one example, among others, of the way in which the Church succeeds in flourishing in the most disparate situations.

<sup>2</sup> Catholic Mind, LII, 1093 (April, 1954), pp. 244-251.

In the history of relations between the Church and State, the concordats, as you know, play an important part. What We have set forth on this subject in the address of December 6, 1953, which We cited earlier, is also valuable for the historical appreciation that one has of concordats. In concordats, let Us say, the Church seeks the juridical security and independence necessary to her mission. "It is possible, let Us add, for the Church and State to proclaim in a concordat their common religious conviction. But it may also happen that the concordat has for its goal, among others, the prevention of conflicts about questions of principle and avoidance from the beginning of possible occasions for conflict. When the Church puts her signature to a concordat, the approval applies to all of its contents. But the deeper meaning may include shades of meaning about which the contracting parties both know. It may signify an expressed approval, but it may also provide for simple tolerance . . . according to the principles which serve as a norm for the coexistence of the Church and her faithful with the powers and men of different belief."<sup>3</sup>

### CHURCH AND CULTURE

The Catholic Church has exercised a powerful and even decisive influence over the cultural development of the past 2,000 years. But she is quite convinced that the source of this influence lies in the spiritual element which characterizes her—her religious and moral life. This is true to such a degree that if this spiritual element were to be weakened, her cultural influence—for example, what she radiates for the benefit of the social order and peace—would also suffer.

Some historians, or more exactly, perhaps, philosophers of history, think that the place of Christianity and therefore of the Catholic Church—"a late development" as Karl Jaspers thought (*Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte*, Frankfurt/M-Hamburg, 1955, p. 65)—is in the Western world. That the work of Christ is "a late development" is a question We do not have any intention of discussing here. Essentially, in fact, it is devoid of interest, and moreover, one cannot make conjectures as to the future of mankind.

What is important to Us is that the Church is aware of having received her mission and her task for all time to come and for all men. She is consequently not tied to any specific culture. St. Augustine was profoundly affected when the conquest of Rome by Alaric brought upon the Roman Empire the first convulsions which presaged its ruin. But he did not think that it would last forever. "The things that God Himself has made will pass away; how much more quickly what Romulus has established," he said (in the sermon "We have heard the Lord Himself Exhorting Us" (105 c. 7 n. 10—*Migne PL*, t. 38, col. 623). In the *City of God* he clearly distinguished between the existence of the Church and the destiny of the Empire. This was to think as a Catholic.

What people call the West or the Western world has undergone pro-

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 250.

found changes since the Middle Ages: the religious split of the 16th century, rationalism and liberalism leading to the state of the 19th century, to its power politics and to its secularized civilization. It therefore became inevitable that relations between the Catholic Church and the West underwent a change. But one cannot characterize even the culture of the Middle Ages themselves as *the* Catholic culture. It, too, although closely tied to the Church, drew its elements from different sources. Even the religious unity of the Middle Ages was not peculiar to them. It was also a typical mark of Christian antiquity in the Roman Empire in both the East and the West from Constantine the Great to Charlemagne.

The Catholic Church does not identify itself with any culture. Her very nature forbids her to do so. She is, however, ready to enter into relations with all cultures. The Church recognizes and allows to continue in existence those things which are not opposed to nature. But in each of them she introduces, in addition, the truth and grace of Jesus Christ. And thus she confers upon them a profound resemblance. It is in this way that the Church contributes most effectively to obtaining world peace.

The whole world still submits today to the action of another element which, it is predicted, will provoke in the history of mankind (in its temporal aspects) great upheavals. This element is science and modern technology, which Europe, or more accurately the Western nations, have created during recent centuries. Those who have not assimilated them are called backward and will be eliminated. Those which do assimilate them, on the contrary, must also consent to face the dangers which they have for "the human being" (Jaspers, *l.c.* p. 67 and 81).

In fact, science and technology are in the process of becoming the common property of mankind. What concerns us is not only the dangers which threaten the human being, but the statement that science and technology show themselves incapable of preventing the spiritual alienation which separates races and continents. This last seems, on the contrary, to be growing. If people want to avoid catastrophe, it will therefore be necessary to put into operation at the same time, and on a high level, powerful religious and moral forces of unification and to make them also the common property of mankind. The Catholic Church is aware of possessing such forces, and she believes that she is not obliged to furnish historical proof of these forces. For the rest, in the face of modern science and technology, she does not isolate herself in opposition, but she behaves rather as a counter-weight and a balancing factor. Thus she will be able in an era in which science and technology are triumphant to fulfill her task as well as she fulfilled it in past centuries.

We should like to explain to you how the Church regards herself as an historical phenomenon and how she sees her task and its relations to certain other historical data. With magnanimity, Our predecessor Leo XIII opened the Vatican archives to researchers. There historians may contemplate as in a mirror the consciousness which the Church has of herself. You know that a single document can lead a person to error; but not a whole collection of archives. So, with the Vatican archives, with their con-

siderable material, which covers whole pontificates and dozens of years and centuries, the Church displays throughout innumerable changes of events, men and situations, a manner of thinking and acting characterized by convictions and determined principles. Thus the Vatican archives are a witness worthy of confidence in regard to the mind of the Catholic Church.

Wishing moreover to fulfill the desires of researchers, We are at present studying the most opportune ways of enlarging still more the gesture of Our predecessor by making accessible to them the documents of a later period.

When he opened the Vatican archives to the public, Leo XIII recalled the classical rule which the historian must observe, according to Cicero: "The first law of history is not to dare to say anything false; and finally not to dare to leave out anything of the truth; that there be no suspicion of favor in writing and no simulation" (Cicero, *De oratore* 1. 2 chap. 15; Leo XIII in the letter *Saepenumero considerantes* of August 18, 1883—*Leo XIII P.M. Acts*, vol. III, Rome, 1884, p. 268). You know how many discussions there have been on the theme "science ought to be free of presuppositions." This theme was like a slogan; like all slogans it did not lack ambiguity and thus led to confusion. There is no science, at least no positive science, which can do without presuppositions. Each one postulates at least certain laws of being and thought which the science uses to develop itself. If instead of saying "free from presuppositions" it had only said "impartial!" Let science in its pursuit of truth not let itself be influenced by subjective considerations—this is a proposal with which everyone would have been able to agree.

That each of you and the science you practise may contribute to making the historical past a lesson for the present and the future, We ask for you with all our heart the most abundant divine blessings.



### **History Not Deterministic**

Can it be that we too are infected with a prevailing heresy, that we do not remember that there is nothing in the long tragedy of history which need have happened, nothing, indeed, which has happened for ill except through the fault of individuals not at the time sufficiently on their guard, without a sufficiently live consciousness of their responsibility, a sufficiently vivid realization of the illimitable consequences of each moment of time?—*Douglas Jerrold in the TABLET (London), Sept. 10, 1955.*

# The Motion Picture Industry

POPE PIUS XII

*Address to representatives of the Italian Movie Industry, June 21, 1955*

**I**T IS a very great pleasure to welcome into Our presence you, the chosen representatives of the world of the cinema.

The extent and influence of the cinema in a brief span of years have attained remarkable proportions, giving, as it were, an impress of their own to our age.

Though at other times and at different functions We have directed careful attention to the activity of the cinema, We are glad today to meet personally those whose whole time is devoted to it, in order to open to them, as a shepherd of souls, Our heart, in which praise for the great achievements obtained by them is joined to a piercing anxiety for the fate of so many souls on which the cinema exercises a profound influence.

One can rightly speak of a special "world of the cinema" when one thinks of the tremendous dynamic activity to which the cinema has given life, whether in the strictly artistic field or in the economic and technical sphere. Toward it are directed the energies of large numbers of producers, writers, directors, actors, musicians, workers, technicians and so many others, whose duties are declared by new names and of such a nature as to create a terminology of their own in modern languages.

One thinks also of the vast number of industrial plants which provide for the production of the material and machines, of the film-studios, of the public cinemas. These, if placed in imagination in a single setting, would surely make one of the most extensive cities in the world—such as, moreover, already exist on a reduced scale, on the fringe of many cities. Further, the sphere of economic interests created by the cinema and drawn in its turn toward it, whether for the production of films or for their exploitation, finds few counterparts in private industry, especially if one considers the bulk of capital invested, the readiness with which it is offered, the speed with which—not without considerable profits—it returns to the same industrialists.

So, then, this world of the cinema cannot do other than create around itself a field of unusually wide and deep influence in the thinking, the habits, the life of the countries where it develops its power—particularly among the poorest classes, for whom the cinema is often the sole recreation after work, and among the youth, who see in the cinema a quick and attractive means of quenching the natural thirst for knowledge and experience which the age promises them.

Thus it is that to the cinema-world of production, which you represent, there corresponds a special, and very much greater world of spectators, who

more or less consciously and effectively receive from the former a definite force guiding their development, their ideas, feelings and—not rarely—their very way of life. From this simple consideration the need for a proper study of the art of the cinema in its origins and its effects becomes clear, to the end that it, as every other activity, may be directed to the improvement of man and the glory of God.

### I. Art of the Cinema—Its Importance

The extraordinary influence of the cinema on present-day society is shown by the growing thirst which this society has for it and which, reduced to numbers, constitutes a quite new and remarkable phenomenon. In the statistics kindly presented to Us, it is reported that during the year 1954 the number of cinemagoers for all the countries of the world taken together was 12,000 million, among whom 2,500 million go in the United States of America, 1,300 million in England, while the figure 800 million puts Italy in the third place.

What is the source of the fascination of this new art which, sixty years after its first appearance, has arrived at the almost magical power of summoning into the darkness of its halls, and not without pay, crowds that are numbered by the billions? What is the secret of the spell which makes these same crowds its constant devotees? In the answer to such questions lie the fundamental causes which bring about the great importance and the wide popularity of the cinema.

The first power of attraction of a film springs from its technical qualities, which perform the prodigy of transferring the spectator into an imaginary world or, in a documentary film, of bringing reality, distant in space and time, right before his eyes. To the technical process, then, belongs the first place in the origin and development of the cinema. It preceded the film and first made it possible. It also makes it every day more attractive, adaptable, alive. The chief technical elements of a cinema show were already in existence before the film was born. Then gradually the film was taken under their control until it at length arrived at the point where it exacts from the technical process the invention of new methods to be placed at its service.

The reciprocity of influence between the technical process and the film has thus brought about a swift development toward perfection, starting from the shaky retakes of a train arriving, to pass on to the animated film of ideas and feelings, at first with silent actors, then with actors speaking and moving in places filled with sound and music. Under the spur of effecting the complete transposition of the spectator into the unreal world, the film has asked of the technical process nature's colors, then the three dimensions of space and at the present time is striving with daring ingenuity to place the spectator on to the actual screen.

In looking today at a film of forty years ago it is possible to note the remarkable technical progress achieved. It must be admitted that by its qualities a present-day film—even though merely a sound film in “black-and-white”—appears like a magnificent stage presentation.

But to a greater degree than from the technical finish, the attractive force and importance of the film derive from the artistic element, which has been polished not only by the contribution made by the authors, writers and actors chosen in accordance with severe tests, but by the undying rivalry established among themselves in worldwide competition.

From the simple visual narration of an ordinary incident there has come to be carried on the screen the progress of human life in its manifold dramas, tracing skilfully the ideals, the faults, the hopes, the ordinary happenings or the high achievements of one or more persons. A growing mastery of improvisation and of setting of the subject has made ever more alive and enthralling the entertainment which, in addition, equals the traditional power of dramatic art of all times and in all civilizations. Nay, it has a notable advantage over the latter by the greater freedom of movement, the spaciousness of the scene and by the other effects special to the cinema.

### LAWS OF PSYCHOLOGY

But to understand thoroughly the power of films, and to make a more exact evaluation of the cinema, it is necessary to take note of the important part played in them by the laws of psychology, either in so far as they explain how the film influences the mind or in so far as they are deliberately applied to produce a stronger impression on the viewer. With careful observation, devotees of this science study the process of action and reaction produced by viewing the picture, applying the method of research and analysis, the fruits of experimental psychology, studying the hidden recesses of the subconscious.

They investigate the film's influence not only as it is passively received by the viewer, but also by analyzing its related psychical "activation" according to immanent laws, that is, its power to grip the mind through the enchantment of the representation. If, through one or the other influence, the spectator remains truly a prisoner of the world unfolding before his eyes, he is forced to transfer somehow to the person of the actor his own ego, with its psychic tendencies, its personal experiences, its hidden and ill-defined desires. Through the whole time of this sort of enchantment, due in large part to the suggestion of the actor, the viewer moves in the actor's world as though it were his own. He even to some degree lives in his place and almost within him, in perfect harmony of feeling, sometimes even being drawn by the action to suggest words and phrases.

This procedure, which modern directors are well aware of and try to make use of, has been compared with the dream state, with this difference, that the visions and images of dreams come only from the intimate world of the one dreaming, whereas the others come from the screen to the spectator, but in such a way that they arouse from the depths of his consciousness images that are more vivid and dearer to him. Often enough, then, it happens that the spectator, through pictures of persons and things, sees as real what never actually happened, but which he has frequently pondered over deep within himself and desired or feared. With cause, therefore,



does the extraordinary power of the moving picture find its profoundest explanation in the internal structure of psychic process, and the spectacle will be all the more gripping in proportion to the degree it stimulates these processes.

As a result the director is constantly forced to sharpen his own psychological sensibility and his own insight by the efforts he must make to find the most effective form to give to a film the power described above, which can have a good or a bad moral effect. In fact, the internal dynamisms of the spectator's ego in the depths of his nature, of his subconscious and unconscious, can lead him thus to the realm of light, of the noble and beautiful, just as they can bring him under the sway of darkness and depravation, at the mercy of powerful and uncontrolled instincts, depending on whether the picture plays up and arouses the qualities of one or the other camp and focuses on it the attention, the desires and psychic impulses. Human nature's condition is such, in fact, that not always do the spectators possess or preserve the spiritual energy, the interior detachment and frequently, too, the strength of will to resist a captivating suggestion and thus the capacity to control and direct themselves.

Along with these fundamental causes and reasons for the attractiveness and importance of motion pictures, another psychic element has been amply brought to light. It is the free and personal interpretation of the viewer and his anticipation of the action's subsequent development. It is this which obtains, in some degree, the delight proper to one who creates an event. From this element, too, the director draws profit through apparently insignificant but skillful movements as, for example, the gesture of a hand, a shrug of the shoulders, a half-open door.

The moving picture has thus adopted in its own way the canons of the traditional narrative—these, too, based on psychological laws—the first of which is to keep the reader's attention awake until the last episode, arousing him to foresee, to await, to hope, to fear, in a word to provoke his anxiety for what will befall the personages who have already become, in some way, his acquaintances. For this reason it would be a mistake to give at the very beginning a clear and transparent outline of the tale or picture. On the contrary, the book, and perhaps more so the moving picture because of its more varied and subtle means, draws its typical fascination from the urge, communicated to the spectator, of giving his own interpretation to the story. This leads him by the thread of a scarcely perceptible logic, or even through harmless deceit, to glimpse that which is indefinite, to foresee an action, to anticipate an emotion, to resolve a problem. Thus, through application in the film of this psychological activity of the viewer, the enchantment of the motion picture is increased.

Because of this inner power of the moving picture and because of its wide influence on the masses of men and even on moral practices, it has drawn the attention not only of competent civil and ecclesiastical authority, but also of all groups possessed of calm judgment and a genuine sense of responsibility.

In truth, how could an instrument in itself most noble, but so apt to



uplift or degrade men, and so quick to produce good or spread evil, be left completely alone or made dependent on purely economic interests?

The watchfulness and response of public authorities, fully justified by law to defend the common civil and moral heritage, is made manifest in various ways: through the civil and ecclesiastical censure of pictures and, if necessary, through banning them; through the listing of films by appropriate examining boards, which qualify them according to merit for the information of the public and as a norm to be followed. It is indeed true that the spirit of our time, unreasonably intolerant of the intervention of public authority, would prefer censorship coming directly from the people.

It would certainly be desirable if good men would agree to ban corrupt movies wherever they are shown and to combat them with the legal and moral weapons at their disposal. Yet such action is not by itself enough.

Private initiative and zeal can wane, and do in fact wane rather quickly, as experience shows. But not so the hostile and aggressive propaganda which frequently draws rich profits from films and which often finds a ready ally in the interior of man, that is, in his blind instinct and its allurements, or his brutal and base urges.

If, therefore, the civic and moral heritage of peoples and families is to be effectively safeguarded, it is most certainly right for public authority to exercise a due intervention in order to hinder or check the most dangerous influences.

To you, so full of good-will, let us now address a confidential and fatherly word. Is it not timely that a sincere evaluation and a rejection of whatever is unworthy or evil be had from the start and in a special way placed in your hands? The charge of incompetence or bias certainly could not be made if, with mature judgment that has been formed on sound moral principles and with earnest intent, you reject whatever debases human dignity, the individual and common good, and especially our youth.

No discerning person could ignore or deride your conscientious and well-weighed judgment in matters concerning your own profession. Put to good use, therefore, that preeminence and authority which your knowledge, your experience, and the dignity of your work confer on you. In the place of irrelevant or harmful shows, present pictures that are good, noble and beautiful, which undoubtedly can be made attractive and uplifting at the same time and even reach a high artistic level. You will have the agreement and approval of everyone of upright mind and heart and, above all, the approval of your own consciences.

## II. The Ideal Film

Up to the present We have directed Our remarks to the motion picture as it actually is. In this second part We should like to speak of the moving picture as it ought to be—that is, of the ideal.

First of all a premise: can one talk of an ideal moving picture? That is called ideal which lacks nothing of what is proper to it and which possesses to a perfect degree what is due. In this sense can there be an ideal

film? Some deny that an absolute ideal can exist. In other words, they affirm that the ideal is a relative concept, meaning something only for a definite person or thing. This difference of opinion is caused in great measure by the different criteria used in distinguishing essential elements from the accidental. Actually, notwithstanding the affirmation of relativity, the ideal will always be found in something absolute which is verified in every case, though in the midst of multiple and divers secondary elements which are demanded by their relation to a definite case.

With this as a premise, We think the ideal film must be considered under three aspects:

1. In relation to the subject, that is, to the spectator to whom it is directed.
2. In relation to the object, that is, to the content of the film.
3. In relation to the community, upon which, as We have already noted, it exercises a particular influence.

Since We wish to dwell at some length on this important matter, today We will limit Ourselves to a treatment of the first heading and leave the second and third to another audience if the opportunity arises.

### THE IDEAL FILM IN RELATION TO THE SPECTATOR

a) The first quality which in this regard should mark the ideal film is respect for man. For there is indeed no motive whereby it can be exempted from the general norm which demands that he who deals with men fully respect man.

However much differences of age, condition and sex may suggest a difference in conduct and bearing, man is always man, with the dignity and nobility bestowed on him by the Creator, in Whose image and likeness he was made (Gen. 1., 26). In man there is a spiritual and immortal soul. There is the universe in miniature, with its multiplicity and variety of form and the marvelous order of all its parts. There is thought and will, with a vast field in which to operate. There is emotional life, with its heights and depths. There is the world of the senses, with its numerous powers, perceptions and feelings. There is the body, formed even to its minutest parts, according to a teleology not yet fully grasped.

Man has been made lord in this universe. Freely he must direct his actions in accord with the laws of truth, goodness and beauty as they are manifested in nature, in his social relations with his fellow men and in Divine revelation.

### CONSCIOUSNESS OF DIGNITY

Since the moving picture, as has been noted, can incline the soul of the viewer to good or to evil, We will call ideal only that film which not only does not offend what We have just described but treats it respectfully. Even that is not enough! Rather We should say (it must provide) that which strengthens and uplifts man in the consciousness of his dignity, that which increases his knowledge and love of the lofty natural position con-

ferred on him by his Creator, that which tells him it is possible for him to increase the gifts of energy and virtue he disposes of within himself, that which strengthens his conviction that he can overcome obstacles and avoid erroneous solutions, that he can rise after every fall and return to the right path, that he can, in fine, progress from good to better through the use of his freedom and his faculties.

### UNDERSTANDING OF MAN

b) Such a moving picture would already contain the basic element of an ideal film. But more still can be attributed to it, if to respect for man is added a loving understanding of him. Recall the touching phrase of the Lord: "I have compassion on the crowd" (Mark, 8, 2).

Human life here below has its high points and low, its rises and falls. It moves amidst virtue and vice, amidst conflicts, difficulties and compromises. It knows victory and defeat. Each man experiences all that in his own way, according to his own interior and exterior circumstances and different ages which, river-like, bear him from mountain uplands through wooded hills down to broad plains baked by the sun.

Thus vary the conditions of man's movement and struggle—in the babe, as the first glimmerings of consciousness stir; in the child, as he enters into full use and control of his reason; in the youth, during the years of development when great storms alternate with periods of marvelous sunshine; in the adult, frequently so completely absorbed in the struggle for existence, with its inevitable shocks; in the aged person, who turns back to view the past with regret, nostalgia and repentance, who examines himself and ponders events as only he can who has sailed far.

The ideal moving picture must show the spectator that it knows, understands and values properly all these things. But it must speak to the child in language suited to a child, to youth in a way fitted to it, to the adult as he expects to be spoken to, that is, by using his own manner of seeing and understanding things.

### SENSE OF REALITY

But a general understanding of man is not enough when the film is intended for a given profession or class. A more special understanding of the particular conditions of various classes of society is also needed. The moving picture must give to him who sees and hears a sense of reality, but of a reality seen through the eyes of one who knows more than he and handled with the will of one who stands beside the spectator to help and comfort him, if necessary.

With this spirit the reality reproduced by the film is presented artistically, for it is proper to the artist that he does not reproduce reality in a mechanical way nor does he subordinate himself to the merely technical capacities of his tools. Rather in using them he elevates and dominates matter without changing it or removing it from reality. An excellent ex-

ample can be seen in the enchanting parables of Sacred Scripture. Their subject matter is taken from the daily life and tasks of the hearers with a fidelity We might call photographic, but it is mastered and raised in such wise that real and ideal are fused in a perfect art form.

### PSYCHICO-PERSONAL ELEMENT

c) To respect and understanding ought to be added the fulfillment of the promises held out and the satisfaction of the desires aroused perhaps from the beginning. Moreover, in general, the millions of people who flock to the cinema are driven there by a vague hope of finding the fulfillment of their secret and undefined desires, of their inner longings. In the dryness of their own life they take refuge in the cinema, as with a magician who can transform all at the touch of his wand.

The ideal film, therefore, ought to know how to respond to this expectation and to bring to it not just any kind of satisfaction, but one which is complete—not, indeed, of all desires, even the false and unreasonable (the unjust and amoral do not come into question here), but of those which the spectator nourishes quite legitimately.

Under one form or another the expectations are, at one time, relief, at another, instruction or joy or encouragement or stimulus. Some are deep, others superficial. The film answers now to one, now to another demand, or else it gives an answer which can satisfy several of them at the same time.

Leaving however to your judgment as specialists what belongs to the technical-aesthetic aspect, We prefer to turn Our attention to the psychico-personal element and to draw from it as well the assurance that—in spite of relativity—there always remains that irresolvable absolute which dictates the principles for granting or denying the answer to the demands of the spectator.

To form an idea of the question there is no need to turn to a consideration of the principles of filmology or of psychology, which have held Our attention thus far. It is sufficient to let oneself be guided in this by sound common sense. In the normal human being, indeed, there is a psychology, so to speak, not learned from books, which derives from his very nature and which puts him on the path to directing himself aright in the ordinary things of every-day life, provided he follows his sound powers of reasoning, his sense of reality, the guidance of his experience and, above all, provided that the affective element in him is controlled and directed. For, in the end, what determines a human person to judge and act is his own actual affective disposition.

On the basis of this simple psychology it is clear that the man who goes to see a serious instructional film has a right to the teaching it promises. He who goes to an historical film wishes to find presented the actual facts, even though technical and artistic needs modify and elaborate the form in which they are presented. He who was promised the picture of a story or a novel ought not to go away from it disappointed at not having seen the unfolding of its plot.

But there is, on the other hand, the man who, weary of the monotony

of his life or weakened by his struggles, looks primarily in the film for relief, forgetfulness and relaxation, perhaps also for flight into a dream world. Are these legitimate demands? Can the ideal film adapt itself to these expectations and seek to satisfy them?

Modern man—it is asserted—in the evening of his crowded or monotonous day feels the need to alter the circumstances of people and places. So he desires entertainments which, with their multiplicity of images, linked it is true by a slight guiding thread, can calm the spirit even if they remain on the surface and do not penetrate very deeply, provided that they bring relief to his depressing state of weariness and banish his boredom.

It is possible that this may be so—even frequently. In that case the film can seek to meet such a condition in an ideal form, avoiding, of course, any lapse into vulgarity or unseemly sensationalism.

It is not being denied that even a somewhat superficial entertainment can rise to high artistic levels and be classed even as ideal, since man has shallows as well as depths. Dull, however, is the man who is entirely superficial and is unable to add depth to his thoughts and feelings.

Doubtless the ideal film is allowed to lead the weary and jaded spirit to the thresholds of the world of illusion so that it may enjoy a brief respite from the pressure of real existence. However, it should take care not to clothe the illusion with such a form that it is taken for reality by minds which are weak and without sufficient experience. The film, indeed, which leads from reality to illusion ought then in some way to lead back from illusion to reality with the same gentleness that nature employs in sleep. Sleep also attracts man, wearied by reality, and plunges him for a short time into the illusory world of dreams. But sleep restores him refreshed and, as it were, renewed, to the bustle of reality, the reality he is used to, in which he lives, and of which, by his work and his struggle, he must always remain master. Let the film follow nature in this. It will then have fulfilled a notable part of its function.

### LOFTY AND POSITIVE MISSION

d) But the ideal film, considered in reference to the spectator, has, finally, a lofty and positive mission to accomplish.

Respect for and understanding of the spectator in responding to his legitimate expectations and just desires are not enough for the evaluation of a film. It must also measure up to the duty which is inherent in the nature of the human person and, in particular, of the human spirit. From the moment his reason is awakened until it is extinguished, man has an image of each single duty to be fulfilled, at the base of which, as the foundation of all, lies that of disposing himself rightly, that is to say, in accordance with upright thought and sentiment, understanding and conscience. The essential directing principle to such an end man derives from considerations of his own nature, from others' teaching, from God's word to men. To detach him from this principle would mean to make him incapable of carrying out his essential mission to its conclusion, just as it would para-

lyze him if one were to cut the tendons and ligaments that join together and support the limbs and parts of his body.

An ideal film, then, has truly the high office of putting the great potentiality and power of influence which We already recognize in the craft of the cinema at the service of man and of being an aid to him in maintaining and rendering effective his self-expression in the path of right and goodness.

It is no secret that outstanding artistic gifts in the director are necessary for this. Everyone knows that there is no difficulty at all in producing seductive films by making them accomplices of the lower instincts and passions which overthrow man, luring him from the precepts of his sane thinking and better will. The temptation of the easy paths is great, all the more so since the film—the poet would say “galley slave”—adapts itself easily to fill halls and coffers, to evoke frenzied applause and to assemble in the columns of every newspaper reviews which are over-subservient and favorable.

But all this has nothing in common with the accomplishment of an ideal duty. It is, in reality, decadence and degradation. Above all, it is the refusal to rise to worthy ideals.

### MARKS OF AN IDEAL FILM

The ideal film, on the other hand, intends to use every power to reach them, even though it means refusal to serve unscrupulous buyers. It does not make an empty show of moralizing, but it more than makes up for the lack of this by positive work which, as circumstances demand, instructs, delights, diffuses genuine and noble joy and pleasure and cuts off every approach to boredom. It is at once light and profound, imaginative and real. In a word, it knows how to beguile without interruption or damage in the bright realms of art and enjoyment. And it beguiles in such a manner that the spectator, at the conclusion, leaves the hall more lighthearted, relaxed and, within himself, better than he entered. If at that moment he were to meet the producer or the director or the writer, he would not fail, perhaps, to take them in a friendly embrace in a burst of admiration and thanks, as We personally, in a fatherly manner, would thank them in the name of so many persons changed for the better.

We have outlined an ideal without concealing the difficulty of its attainment. But at the same time We express confidence in your outstanding ability and your good-will. To bring into existence the ideal film is a privilege of artists gifted beyond the ordinary. Certainly it is an exalted goal toward which, fundamentally, your ability and your vocation summon you. God grant that all who are capable of it may assist you!

That such wishes of Ours may find fulfillment in this important field of life, so near to the realms of the spirit, We call down on you and on your families, on the artists and groups of workers of the world of the cinema, God's blessing, in token of which may Our paternal Apostolic Benediction descend upon you all.

# The Catholic Mind

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EDITOR: Thurston N. Davis

EXECUTIVE EDITOR: Benjamin L. Masse

With the collaboration of the *AMERICA* staff

EDITORIAL OFFICE: 329 West 108th St., New York 25, N. Y.

BUSINESS MANAGER: Joseph F. MacFarlane

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Patrick H. Collins

BUSINESS OFFICE: 70 East 45th St., New York 17, N. Y.

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